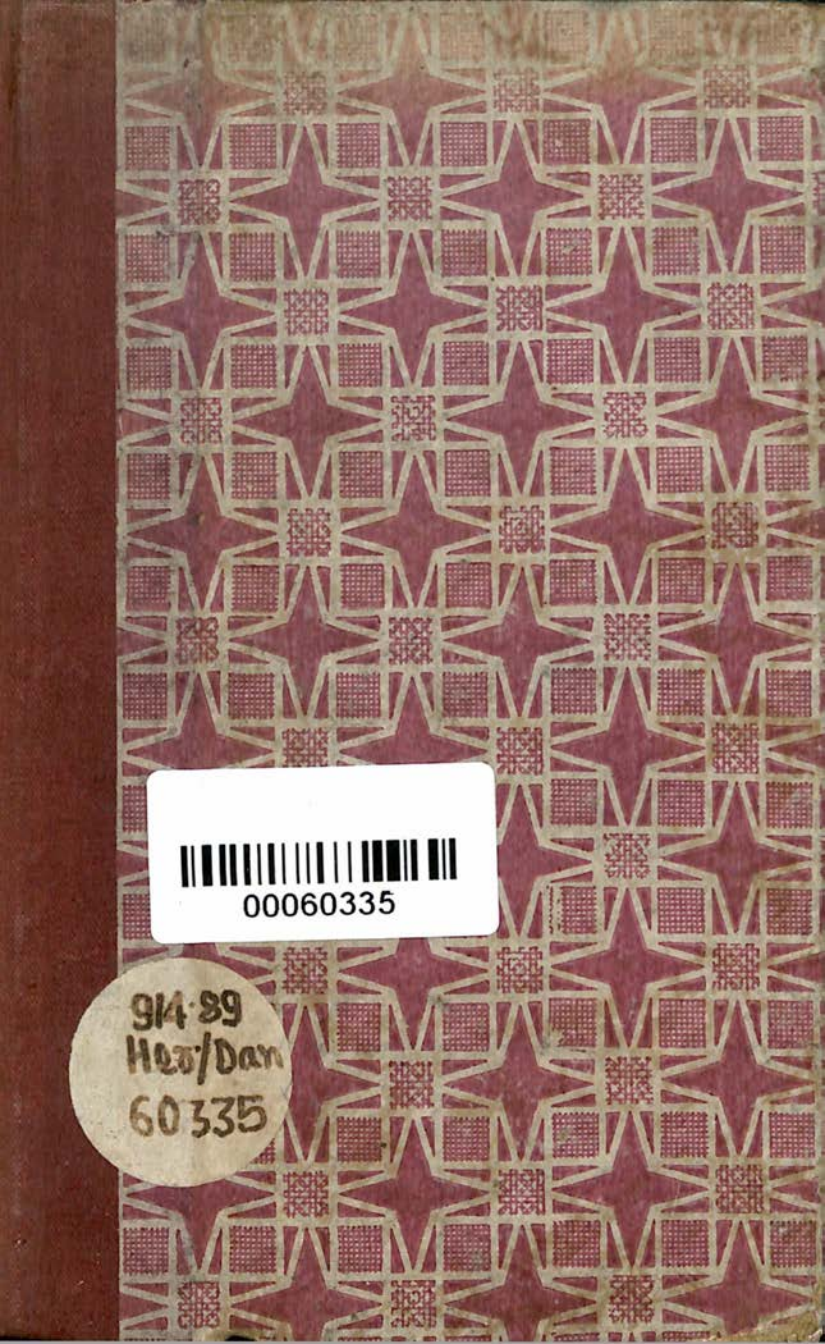
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THE

DANES IN CAMP:

LETTERS FROM SÖNDERBORG.

BY

60335
ac.

AUBERON HERBERT.

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LONDON:
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66, BROOK STREET, W.
1864.

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LONDON:
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TO

My Mother,

THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF CARNARVON.

PREFACE.

In venturing to publish letters written in so homely a form as these, I have been influenced by the double wish to reproduce in some simple fashion, for the sake of those of my countrymen who are interested in the present fortunes of Denmark, a part of my personal impressions and experiences, and also to place on grateful record the kindness with which soldier and civilian, stranger and acquaintance, invariably befriended me during my visit to that country.

I have in no way fettered myself with preserving exactly the original shape of these

letters. I have altered, added, and suppressed, suiting my own convenience, and only careful as to the one point of making my picture faithful to its original. Throughout I have been anxious to prevent any *ex post facto* view from giving colour to past events, and have only sought to express opinions, right or wrong, which belonged to the moment.

There are two points on which I have dwelt strongly and repeatedly throughout these letters. These two points—the weakness of the Dybböl position, and the brave character of the Danish army—claim a few words from me here. As to the former, it is sufficient for me to say that my opinion was not formed from a wish to pare down any possible success of the Prussians, but from a careful observation of the whole position. It was not my opinion alone, but I believe I am right in saying, that without exception it was the opinion of every Englishman then in Sönderborg. I, as others also did, insisted

on it in letters to England, when I first became acquainted with the position; and I insisted on it even more strongly after the successful affair of Easter Monday. There are those who know how decidedly expressed was that opinion on my own part, and on that of other Englishmen, whose judgment was more valuable. As to the second point, I have not softened or shaded off any expression of my admiration for the Danish soldiers, or of my confidence in their bravery; nor is that admiration and that confidence in any one degree lessened or shaken, by what has taken place since I wrote—the storming of the Dybböl forts.

I do not wish to look away from the face of any fact; I know that the resistance on the 18th of March was not stubborn, and that the Prussian success was gained comparatively easily; and that while here and there the bravery of despair was shown and lives laid down most fearlessly, the real and obstinate

courage of the Danish race was not thrown into the balance at the moment of the struggle. It may easily be conceived that it is hard to write these words, as a preface to that high praise which in these letters is constantly given to the Danish soldiers; but of that praise, as I said before, not one word do I wish unwritten. I only see in what has happened, how completely military conditions and necessities override every other thing; how fragile is human bravery and endurance; and how easily you may over-tax the finest fighting material in flesh and blood, up to the very point of its breaking down and becoming worthless. At the first commencement of the month of April, there was an army in Alsen composed of peasants, ploughmen, and fishermen; men awkward and slow in appearance, but men who were inspired with a devotion to their country, and with a high courage which quietly despised danger in a manner such as I have not seen elsewhere.

These men, who were officered by simple-minded yet almost courtly gentlemen, were practised in none of the craft of war; they had learnt neither to run nor to leap nor to perform the many athletic feats which were so familiar to their enemy; but they were men who had a strong grip upon their bayonet, and who would have died facing the troops of any enemy that could have been led against them. On the 2nd of April, up to the 18th, a cannonade was opened against them, exceeding at times I believe in violence the bombardment of Sebastopol. After the first two or three days the trial began. It was not the trial which the garrison of a besieged place has ordinarily to go through, but it was of a different kind. From that time up to ten o'clock on the 18th this little army had, day after day and night after night, to be exposed without shelter—I say this advisedly, giving the details hereafter—to shells often falling at a rate of twenty-

five and thirty and upwards in the minute. To stand unsheltered through this withering and pitiless storm, in momentary expectation of an attack through the hours of the day and the hours of the night; to be powerless and forbidden to attempt to answer with their own guns the crushing discharge poured upon them; to be powerless and forbidden to check by a single sortie their enemy as fold upon fold he closed in upon the doomed forts; to see the destruction swooping down upon them and to raise no hand to prevent it; this,—without the defence of science, without the resource of war, without the meanest shelter, at the last without even a commander, and always without hope,—this was the fiery affliction through which that army has passed. There are brave men to be found who for hours will stand or lie silent under fire, knowing that the moment of victory is being purchased by their patient courage; but here for two weeks, this has been undergone by the

same handful of men; who throughout that period of suffering when death was sown around them alike in every quarter—in the ruined forts, under the broken parapet, on their line of march, in their sleeping quarters, wherever they set their foot, whether they rose up or laid them down —have stood with a full understanding of the sheer hopelessness of their position, and with despair staring them sullenly in the face. Is it strange that at the last these long-enduring Northmen clamoured to be led into action, and at least to be allowed to take a life for a life? Is it strange that a fatal depression crushed body and mind, and that they became like those men who, "in the morning say, Would God it were even, and at even, Would God it were morning."

I do not assign the blame—I do not know if it is true that there came an order to hold a position which was long since untenable—I

do not inquire how far amongst men, how far amongst piteous circumstances, the cause is to be sought—but this I do know, that a very great evil has come to pass, that the bravest natures have been over-burdened, that an army—officers and men—possessed of the very soul of courage and nerved with endurance itself, has been so dealt by as to become lifeless and stripped of qualities which were the very same as those which have won for us the hardest earned victories of our history. The army which I knew, and with which I lived at the first beginning of last month in Alsen, and the army which was shot down on the morning of the 18th of April, are not the same. It is impossible that it should be so. A burden too heavy to bear was laid upon that army, and the end of the story was such as it always has been, and will be until human nature is changed. The endurance of the coward and the brave man differs only in degree,

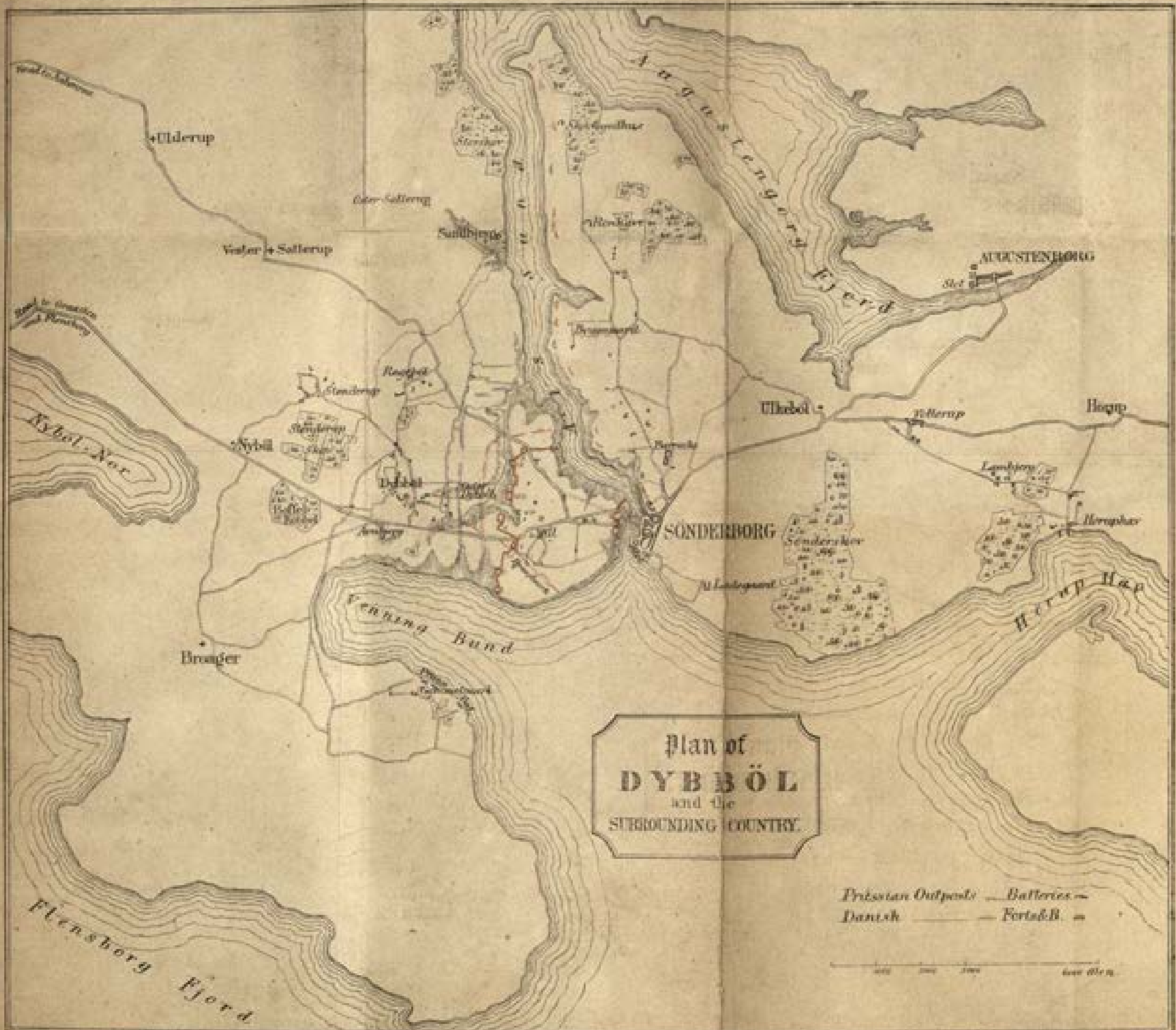
and it is only by going a little further in the one case than in the other that you find the measure of both. It is with them just as it is with the weak and the strong on whose back you pile weight. The quantity that they can bear is different, but is equally fixed and certain in both cases. As to the events of this last sad month, as I said before, if faults there have been, I do not attempt to find them. For me, simply, there will always be fault enough in the one cruel fate which placed this levy of peasants behind a row of feeble earthworks to play the part of being crushed, and gave them qualities well suited for their part; which placed an enemy in front of them, who with the most highly and carefully organized army, with no limit in numbers, with all the perfection of detail which time money and labour could develop, with each application of science, with each latest improvement and following line and letter of the most approved

methods, has also played his part, also with qualities well suited for it.

In conclusion—in respect of these Letters, although I am aware that haste is but a poor apology for imperfect work, I am yet obliged to take refuge under its cold shelter. I must, owing to other duties, leave much as it now stands which I should have wished re-written and re-arranged.

I am indebted to my friend, the companion of my visit to the Danish camp, Mr. W. E. Hall, for the sketch of Sönderborg, and the map of the Danish and Prussian positions.

A. H.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Rundgrd
Dybbøl
Dybbøl Mølle
Sønderskov
Sønderborg
Herregaard
Vemmingbund
Vemmingbund
Broager
Hörup Haf
Flensborg Fjord
Plan of
DYBBÖL
and the
SURROUNDING COUNTRY.
Prussian Outposts ... Batteries ...
Danish ... Forts & B. ...

LETTERS FROM DENMARK.

LETTER I.

Lübeck, 17 March, 1864.

My dear ———

Up to this point we have travelled fast, and met with neither difficulties nor adventures. Our journey over the old ground has afforded the usual amount of interest in things and persons.

As our first day passed into evening we left the well-defended frontier towns of France, wondering as we threw a hasty glance over the old works—some of whose lines were drawn by the pencil of Vauban—if

they are ever destined to become as well-known in the pages of our modern warfare as they have been in those of earlier history. Then we begin to notice the many little signs which tell us that we have passed into Belgian territory. The French which is spoken in our carriage has become thick in sound, having lost its ring and lightness; English falls oftener on the ear; the *Indépendance Belge* escaping from the imperial shadow makes its appearance; our fellow-travellers show a greater interest than hitherto in the events of the political world, and a most refreshing sympathy with any symptom of Danish success.

Some hours have to be spent at Brussels. We divide them between dinner and a night view of the Hotel-de-Ville. The old council-house looks grand and imposing, though the few stars and the cloud-lost moon fail in their duty and do but little to help us to admire it. The shade, however, in which it lies is

only like a cloak gracefully worn, and cannot conceal the energy and stateliness with which its proportions rise. I have always been sceptical in the matter of Bourgeois Government. Whatever may be its excellencies in many respects, however valuable a part it has played in times of rude civilisation, it is seldom inspired with great traditions; its aims fall to a low level; and it does not rise above the interests and objects of a mercantile community. In the early days of the Low Countries, or under the reign of a Louis Philippe, there is a narrowness about it, which does not speak of great designs, reared strongly and surely upwards. But whenever I look at this building, as it rises, lording it over the market-place beneath, and still fresh and beautiful under its crown of many years, I have difficulty in refusing to believe that it stands as the symbol of certain qualities in the minds of those men who built it, who sat and held their counsels within it. It can

scarcely be that the thing created should breathe a grandeur and nobility which was altogether foreign and unknown to the creators of it. And yet such reasoning is more natural than safe; for it has always struck me as one of the sad lessons in art, that at best you can but feebly and uncertainly read the mind of the poet, painter, musician, or architect in the work with which he claims your admiration.

We reached Cologne in the earliest grey of morning. The cathedral is already open, and allows us partially to redeem the Sunday, which is to be given to the railway carriage, by the half hour spent within its walls. We sat down silent and motionless, yielding ourselves up to the impressiveness of the scene; the grey of the morning was struggling with the irresolute light of the lamps; up the aisle, and in and out of the great columns, the figures of women were flitting noiselessly; apart from the body of the church the side-aisles still

held undisturbed the darkness of the night, and it seemed as if these cavernous recesses left in the possession of the old past drew themselves back from the ceremonies which filled the centre of the building. Above the restless crowd sprang the great pillars, drawn nearer together the higher that they rose, as if blending towards one object and seeming, as it were, to stand between heaven and earth and be the high priest of the prayers offered up; whilst through all floated the waves of music, drawn out into soft vibrations by the mighty space which embraced them. I ought not, however, to indulge myself in such a description, for you have read many a sermon for yourself in the grey stones of other cathedrals.

Hanover we reached in the afternoon. After a good many hours of railway, the kind welcome which awaited us there was doubly pleasant, and we did not recommence our journey until the next morning. Although,

as a city, Hanover is not so picturesque as some others in Northern Germany and in the Low Countries, yet I doubt if some of its houses are to be surpassed by any elsewhere in richness of carving, variety of outline, or quaintness of architectural detail. There are few things which escape the photographer of the present day, but these have every right to the notice of his art.

From Hanover to Hamburg we, or our fellow-travellers, grow more communicative than has been the case hitherto. Opposite to us, are an oldish gentleman wearing an official-looking coat and cap, and his daughter, whom he is taking home from her pension at Paris. This young lady is, I imagine, a type of a certain class, which is constantly appearing and again disappearing in Germany.* She adores Paris and all that is Parisian; she

* This philo-français represents the advance of French civilisation. She is to Germany, what some South Slesvigers are to Denmark. As yet the Zouaves have not undertaken her protection.

largely subsidises her English and her German with French expressions, having first of all waved her pretty hands despairingly in the air, as if to convey to us the sterility of the two former languages, and her own want of ease and familiarity in the use of them; and she expresses her contempt pretty openly for all parts of Germany with which she is not personally connected. The exceedingly cosmopolitan views of the old gentleman with the official coat and buttons, and the breadth of his philosophy, which seemingly kept him at peace alike with all the various political parties of the moment, made us doubt for some time as to his profession; but at last he confirmed our surmises by presenting us with his card, and informing us that he was the proprietor of a large hotel at ———.

The traveller, however, with whom we had the most conversation was of quite a different stamp. He was one of that large party in Germany whom the Governments of Austria

and Prussia are by turns anxious to conciliate and to repress, but whom they both manage so awkwardly, that being neither conciliated nor repressed, they are allowed to dictate the policy of these two respectable cabinets. You may care to hear something of this man's views. He is a strong German in the Slesvig and Holstein question (I do not lend myself you see to the German shibboleth Schlesvig-Holstein, which artfully conveys the supposition—not based on the slightest foundation of truth—that the two duchies are inseparably connected). What to him is Denmark or the Dane if they stand in the way of the growing aspirations of the father-land? Should the Germany of forty millions stand panting for sea breezes when the advance of her civilisation has already conquered and colonised the territory which at once opens the way for her? To him not only are the Danes, as a nation, mere barbarians as contrasted with German learning, lite-

rature, and refinement, but the Danes are personally dishonest, untrustworthy as merchants upon 'Change. He hates the Governments of Austria and Prussia; he believes that they are playing into the hands of his naturally-born enemy; he is indignant that the plans of the confederation—at which word his heart swells—should be so lightly flung aside; but the vials of his wrath are especially reserved for Prussia and Prussians. The insolence of their gold and lace has entered deep into his soul. Prussia is a barrack-room; its officers are drill serjeants; its citizens are soldiers, instead of its soldiers being citizens. He has no respect for treaties, for they are but arrangements made amongst kings and diplomats; and for kings and diplomats he has the most unfeigned contempt. Indeed, he talked so lightly about revolutions and "kings'-heads" that we both shuddered on our seat and were visibly affected.

Some of his remarks on England struck me as containing grains of truth.

"You are personally disliked," he said, "because you affect a superiority over other nations. No nation can submit patiently to be despised, and yet this is what your speech and your writing and your manner require of us to bear. You have now no right to be surprised if, when your foreign policy has made you the laughing-stock of Europe, we take advantage of the opportunity to hurl back this contempt at you." After that he relapsed into wildness with only occasional gleams of reason. "You do not understand in England such questions as the Dano-German. Your people are uneducated, and forced to follow the teaching of the press, which is corrupt. The Manchester school is coming to the head of affairs, and they will never allow you to go to war, however many a 'dröhnungs-note' you may write. You are no longer a military power. You could not even raise during the

Crimean war as many soldiers as you wanted in England. You are very great at spinning cotton or working iron; at making money, but not at making war."

There are two ideas, as you will notice here, which have taken fast hold of the German mind. The one that our press has entirely lost its independence,* and the other that England could not and would not sustain the burden of a great war. It was in vain that my companion quoted the well-known calculation of Mr. Wilson as to the modern resources of England, and protested with some warmth against the dangerous inferences which Germany was drawing as to her peaceful disposition. The German stoutly

* If I remember rightly, the German Professor whose correspondence with Lord Clanricarde was published in the *Times*, in speaking of our press, uses the expression "sold to your aristocracy."—Mr. Laing, in his "State of Denmark" (p. 71, 72), mentions the Duke of Augustenborg's ambition to bribe the *Times* to support his cause. I may add that all that Mr. Laing has written about the Duke and family might be read with great advantage at the present moment.

maintained his ground against all arguments. As for myself, I must fairly confess that when we fairly touched upon this last point, unroused by the extravagance which accompanied it, I hung my head and bit my tongue.

At Hamburg we were obliged to stay three days; there being no boat from Lübeck to Copenhagen during that time. The delay was unpalatable, since the German papers daily informed us that "the grand day," when the Prussians were to swarm over the Dybböl fortifications, and Prince Frederic Charles was to sup and sleep in Sönderborg, was announced for the following day; but thanks to the kindness of Mr. ———, whose hospitality was doubly hospitable since we would not confess ourselves converted to his German views, and thanks to the resources of the place, we made a satisfactory use of the time. My friend indeed turned it to the best purpose, by employing the greater part of it in shaking off a slight attack of cold and

fever, from which he was quite recovered when we recommenced our journey. I believe that fever is here the form which a cold not uncommonly takes. A *ptisane* and a heap of blankets were the simple but efficient remedy which we applied.

I also on my side spent the interval profitably by laying in a stock of what we consider necessaries—a great block of smoked beef, soup in lozenges, chocolate in cakes, a square of carpet, down the middle of which—our invention being stimulated by the scantiness of materials—we have had three lengths of oilcloth sewn, so that, if needs be, we are prepared for camping out. These preparations, you will suggest, would have been better carried out in England; but unfortunately we had not the time to do so.

The time unoccupied by these purchases I devoted to the old part of the town. A ramble at leisure there would alone repay a longer journey than that which we have yet

taken. Much as I should shock the lordly merchants of the new town by saying so, I must confess that all their well-paved streets, and comfortable houses, broad bridges, and arcades have not the same value to me as has a single one of those quaint turns and twistings which the canals take down in old Hamburg. How shall I describe to you one such a view which I found yesterday in crossing the low narrow bridges which link the streets together. These canals are unlike all other regular and well-conducted canals; for they turn and wind just as if they were impatient of following their usual straight-set ways, and were capriciously bent on pleasing the eye of a passer-by.

Straight and tall the houses rise on both sides of them, forbidding all sunlight to the narrow space which looks stifled and jammed up between them. They are the strangest old houses, and seem for all the world as if their place rather belonged to

some out-of-the-way and cobweb-covered picture-gallery, than to a living and bustling city. So quaint are they, and so irregular, with so many strange caverns, recesses, projections, gaping doors, mysterious windows, impenetrable arches, wind-and-water-gnawed piles, that you find it difficult to believe that the same life can go on in them as in the square solid whitewashed blocks of houses which belong to the new town, and on which you turned your back some half-hour since. The imagination refuses to be satisfied except with believing that some mystery is lurking within those walls, and that the inside of those buildings—could one but penetrate as far—would have a story of its own to tell, as grotesque and romantic as that which is written outside on their wizened faces. I know not exactly what it is—the sleeping water, the imprisoned air, or the sombre look of the faded brick, but from some cause or other a sense of unreality pervades

the whole scene, and you feel as if you had stumbled, as I said, on some picture in an old gallery, and that it is not real water and real buildings at which you are looking.

But, as you remain watching, some barge gravely glides round the corner, and moors itself to the huge piles; the folding doors from the topmost storey yawn slowly open; and from the projecting crane hook and rope creep down and noiselessly begin their heavy work, carrying upwards the lazy looking sacks. Then you feel that your picture is disturbed, and although the sense of unreality still clings to the scene and refuses to be waved away, it cannot survive even this drowsy motion, and it glides almost without effort into a dream. I do not remember to have seen any painter who has done justice to these canals. They are well worthy, I think, to beget a Canaletto of their own.

One other feature struck me in the old town. Here and there, close against the

houses, there are allowed to grow some very old trees, blackened with the influences of time and smoke, looking as if many hundreds of years ago they might have felt the joys and sorrows which belong to the existence of trees, but as if not a drop of blood was now left to run up and down their charred and hag-like stems. I doubt if the old creatures ever put out any leaves in the summer, but if they do, the windows against which they press so closely must have no want of any other curtain. I do not know what sentiment has led to their being spared, but I suppose that each generation has felt unwilling to raise its hand against that which formed so close a part of the house in which it was itself born.

But, with all the attractions of the old town, I was not sorry to leave Hamburg. Vice here has a hardihood from which the eye turns with relief. There are sights to be seen in some of the streets of the new town,

sufficient to make one believe that he had wandered back into some old city of fabulous iniquity. I can now better understand "the dreary oppressiveness of sin," which foreigners have described as haunting many of our London streets.

Our hotel was the scene yesterday of martial enthusiasm. There was a dinner given to some of the German militia, which was finally crowned with healths and toastings. Each toast was drunk with "ein, zwei, drei," and accompanied with a song which was evidently the German version of our "For he is a jolly good fellow!" There was not the same "breadth" in the cheer, or one might have believed oneself listening to the convivial record of the triumphs of an Oxford boat's crew.

We reached Lübeck to-day, and our steamer will sail to-morrow. A ramble after the picturesque has brought me back a little disappointed after all that I have heard of

this town. Some of its streets and houses are not wanting in character, but to me they have not the quaint impressiveness which I described to you as belonging to the canals of Hamburg. The impression, however, which one soon forms in North Germany, is confirmed here: that the most excellent effect can be produced with red brickwork. In England we are accustomed to think of it as inflicting dull staring blots on the country-side and remaining raw and undigested by the landscape which surrounds it, but in this country, when crusted and browned by time, it is most effective for church or house. I must not leave unmentioned the green spires of copper, which are common here and which find an admirable foreground in the rough red roofs out of which they rise.

LETTER II.

Korsör, 19 March, 1864.

We crossed from Lübeck to Copenhagen in a Swedish boat, and a nice clean comfortable boat it was. You can, I think, make a fair guess at the seafaring qualities of a nation by the comfort and accommodation of their passenger-boats. At all events, I have never been deceived into believing that the nations in the South of Europe are naturally born sailors, by the appearance of those of their steamboats on which I have set foot.

We touched at Malmö on the Swedish coast, and though fortunate enough to have

missed the storm of the last few days, we yet suffered by its after effects. The channel leading out of Malmö is very narrow, and marked out by buoys. Whilst engaged in threading out our way between the buoys, we heard a soft rasping sound, felt a slight shock, and found ourselves aground. The navigation of the Baltic is I believe peculiarly exposed to this danger and annoyance, as according to the wind which has been blowing (there is, you recollect, no tide) the depth of water will occasionally vary by several feet; though in our case it was simply the violence of the past storm which had silted up a bank of sand in the bed of our channel. Luckily a little tug appeared presently, and came to extricate us.

The passengers, however, were not allowed to be idle, for the captain collected them on one of the paddle-boxes, and having formed them into line, sent them, after a course of drilling, across the bridge against the other

paddle-box; a manœuvre which I will take upon me to assert, we executed with as great precision as the Prussian battalions will display on "the grand day," when they are directed against the Dybböl forts. After having repeatedly stormed each paddle-box—our object being to sway the ship so violently as to disengage her hold on the sand—the patient little tug meantime persevering in her labours, we once more found ourselves afloat and free to continue our voyage.

To Copenhagen, the "haven of merchants," worthy of being the capital of a nation of sailors—you make your approach not without respect as you see her looking quietly through her forts at the sea before her. No part of the town rises into an eminence, and no heights give her that commanding appearance, which belongs to other cities of the water; but she sits staid and low-crowned, with an air of resolve and fortitude, a true type of the race which inhabit her.

As soon as we are landed, we gain our first experience of Danish civility at the Custom-house. Two of the officials speak a certain amount of English, with which they engage us in a political discussion on the conduct of England, and startle us with the intelligence that a change of ministry has taken place. Lord Russell is no favourite here at present, and this, joined with our friend's limited knowledge of English, perhaps accounted for the strength of expression in which his opinion of our Foreign Secretary found words. I have, however, since noticed that a Dane, when speaking on exciting subjects, finds a certain temptation to make use of that familiar English expletive, which perversely enough seems on some occasions to be the only one word capable of satisfying the emotions. If such occasions are to be recognised, talking about what the Germans are doing at present, is decidedly one of them.

On the first evening of my arrival I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of my kind Danish friend Mr. ——, to whom I had brought letters. He carried me off to sleep at his house out of town, mounting me on his Iceland pony—a clever little beast and wonderful trotter, able, I should think, to do fifteen or sixteen miles in the hour—and treated me with the most pleasant of all hospitality, that which shakes itself free at once from all forms. We gave the pony his supper, a large bowl of fresh milk, which he receives every day only from his master's hands, and a mixture of barley and oats—the barley, to my surprise, being in the proportion of two to one—the right proportion, says my host, to promote endurance.

The old lady who constitutes my host's household had gone to rest, so he straightway proceeded to make me up a bed in his own room—a proceeding with which I did not attempt to interfere, being far too much

charmed with the pleasant and easy terms on which we played host and guest to each other, to wish for any alteration of them. I could not indeed help expressing to him afterwards, as we sat chatting before turning into bed, my regret that our English hospitality is losing much of its worth, by being robbed of all its simplicity. I do not know how we are to resist the uncomfortable advances of civilisation in this direction, but I own that there is something to me which savours of a large hotel, in our system of the two days visit, and the presents to be made to the heads of the down-stairs department. It is, however, useless to complain, as this is but one out of the many things in which we are victims of our own customs.

The Danes, fortunafely as I think, have not as yet fallen into this habit of making presents to each other's servants. It is, I believe, very rarely done, and only recognised on the one occasion of playing cards. It is

then customary to leave some coin under the candlestick.

We were up early in the morning. I was first aroused by the old lady bringing in the mastiff puppy, to say good morning to his master. When I awoke for the second time, I found the English luxury of a tin bath waiting for me, and my host already flitted. I hastened to follow his example, and by the time that I was dressed breakfast was ready. The Danish breakfast is like our own—a truly substantial meal, and is generally provided with a goodly choice of cold meats. Cheese plays an important part in it, replacing fruit in the proverb, and being called gold in the morning, silver at midday, and lead at night.

Comparing breakfasts, I here take occasion to notice what has been striking me most forcibly during the last few days—the resemblance between the Danes and the English. There is not only a resemblance between us

in certain leading points of character, not only do I think that they have a double portion of that honesty and straightforwardness which we are apt to claim for our own national character and peculiar birthright, not only have they a manliness and dignity of behaviour which is certainly a northern rather than a southern virtue, but I find that in some trifling matters of detail, particularly in our failings, the resemblance becomes almost amusing. Before coming to these, I have to remark that we are neither of us a nation of diplomatists. I do not think that we have as a nation ever taken kindly to the craft. I do not venture to say whether that which is deficient in us is a loss or a gain, but whether loss or gain the Danes are not more successful than we are. They cherish their personal independence in the same way as we do; their thoughts are outspoken; their press is free; a spy is a thing as unknown to them as it is to us; you scarcely meet a

policeman in the streets, and if you do he has nothing in common with the self-important *sergeant-de-ville* whom we in England so much dislike; even the guards on the railway are "good fellows," and not overclad in their own importance; and wherever you go you feel that this fresh exhilarating northern air was not made to be breathed by men living under the terrors of a petty officialism.

Then as to our failings in common. Their cooking is of the same unartistic kind as our own, and as far removed from French refinements; their shops, like our own—though a change begins to take place in England in this respect—are wanting in the brilliancy and arrangement, which with other nations so successfully attract the travelling moths as they flutter about the continent. Indeed their character is like our own northern island, with its wealth deeply buried in it for those who care to pierce below, and etaler, or the art of display, is not an

instinct born with the Dane. There is also a want of method and management with them, as notwithstanding our great work-shops and manufactories, and mercantile combinations, I shall always contend that there is with us, and from the administration of a fleet down to that of an hotel I look upon both nations as equally unsuccessful; though how much of the blame in some of these matters is to be laid on the shoulders of constitutional government I do not take on myself to decide. In a word, neither Danes nor Englishmen have been born diplomatists, or cooks, or haberdashers; but they both have a share of sound qualities, and not least amongst them a healthy love of individual freedom, which takes little account of any inconsistencies or inconvenience which may belong to it.

Copenhagen itself is like London in one respect. Although it is a small capital, and has not the smoke and soot with which we are so

familiar, yet like London it is entirely innocent of any architectural beauties. Its streets are wide, clean, and well kept; but like London it has neither the quaint picturesqueness of an old town nor any fine buildings or imposing boulevards. Those, however, who live in it seem to have the same feeling of wayward affection for it as we have for London. At present, though the Chambers are sitting, a sombre quietness is in possession of the city. I went into one House, which is a comfortable but simple and unpretending room, and like themselves and all that belongs to them, almost to a fault abstaining from display.

Copenhagen is attired in few colours. By far the larger number of persons whom I meet are in mourning—most of them still for the late king, who was so popular with the people that I have heard it said they refused to lay aside their mourning at the expiration of the appointed time. Many, I suppose, for losses

of those who have been nearer to them. The late king won the affections of the people by a certain joviality of manner and by mixing with them as one of themselves; he would often attend when a fire took place in the town, and sometimes snatching a bucket out of the hand of a fireman, would lend royal aid as well as presence to the business of putting out the flames. When he mounted the throne he had to contend with a considerable amount of popular disfavour; but his easy manners proved irresistible with the crowd, and there is scarcely a cottage in Denmark where you will not find his picture. It may not I hope be long before the same feeling attaches itself to the person of the present king, who, placed in the most trying and adverse circumstances, is slowly winning it for himself by dint of his courtesy of manner, his readiness to expose himself to danger, and his real devotion to his people.

On my way into the town with my host we

rode past a body of recruits. They were singing as we passed them the stirring song of "den tappre land-soldat;" and though the men seemed at first sight somewhat heavy in appearance, they are not so in their temper, and I noticed that their heads rose more erect, their chests swelled out, a light shone from their eyes, and the words rang out higher and clearer as the good townspeople turned to see them pass. I shall have a long letter to write to you presently about the soldiers, who are fast possessing themselves of a deep interest over my companion and myself.

It seemed strange to me, as I walked through Copenhagen, to think how regularly —at least for business, if not for pleasure— the stream of life was flowing on, while not so very far off an invading army was encamped upon Danish soil, and Danish soldiers, holding the last defences over which the wave of invasion has not yet swept, were toiling and suffering. Here and there, in the midst of

this every-day life, some feature of what is being played out on another part of the stage just shows itself; it may be a regiment of recruits marching down to the railway, *en route* for the scene of war; it may be the arrival of those who lift the curtain a little higher, the sick and wounded, coming to be cared for in the Copenhagen hospitals; or the military funeral of some officer well-known and beloved.

But life must go on, in all the thousand ways in which it does in a capital, and it makes but a slight pause as these things thrust themselves on its notice. It is not that the Danes are indifferent, for their thoughts and hopes all wing their way to Als, and under that quiet surface lie feelings as deep and strong as the tide which is ceaselessly flowing under the silent sea; but, after all, men continue to eat, and drink, and move, and pursue the necessary ways of life in their own house, even up to the last moment,

when *proximus ardet Ucalegon.* It was so in London during the Crimean war. It is so in New York, says the *Times* correspondent, at the present day.

One thing, however, it brings forcibly before the mind. Philosophers are apt to teach us that the sharp scourge and blood-letting of war is a good thing for a nation. It may be so; it may quicken stagnant thought, and discover to us poets and heroes; but it does this at the cost of sacrificing the most willing, of feeding on the bravest lives, of wringing with pain those hearts which are unselfish and loving; whilst those who never suffer in the sufferings of others, the greedy, and the money-making, and the cowards, remain untroubled, or grow rich "battening in the shambles, when the best and the noblest are falling around them." So the good blood passes away, and the bad still remains.

It will be with difficulty that I can express to you the kindness and courtesy which meets

us at every turn, not only from those to whom we are introduced or have brought letters, but even from strangers in the street. More than once or twice it has happened to us on inquiring our way in Copenhagen, that the Dane whom we have stopped has turned his back on the direction in which he himself was going, and insisted on accompanying us until all the difficulties of our road were at an end. On one occasion, on the first day of our landing, as if at once to initiate us into the kindly ways of the country, a stranger-friend not only pointed us out the object of our inquiries, the post-office, but acted as our interpreter and obtained not without some trouble the information which we wanted. Each little incident of the day gives us fresh proof of the kindly natures which surround us, and makes us believe that to be born a Dane is to be born an honest, courteous gentleman. Both my friend and myself are anxious not to exaggerate the kindness which we experience,

and not to let first impressions too strongly influence us. We have formed a habit of referring our impressions on this point for correction to each other, but, I am bound to add, as often as we do so we find that correction is difficult.

As you will easily conceive, the conduct of England has placed neither our nation nor our policy in a favourable light. The Danes are sorely hurt at our desertion of their fortunes. They feel it the more acutely because between them and England there has existed a silent brotherhood. English is the language which is taught in their schools and colleges, and which forms a regular part of their education. Their customs, their feelings, their ways of thought, their character, and sometimes their very look, is English. To English literature they have turned, in the attempt to oppose it to that of Germany, which during the last years has been creeping silently northwards; English is the language

which they seem to have chosen even in preference to French or German, which would have afforded a better link of communication between themselves and the nations of that great continent on whose outer edge their fortunes are cast and to which they cling desperately, with nothing but the bravery and the stern virtues of the old Norse race to maintain them on their narrow foothold.

Whatever the Danes feel on the subject of England, they say but little to an Englishman. It always touches me to see how much their courtesy seals their lips. Sometimes, however, the thought escapes indirectly from them,—"I cannot go to England this year," said one gentleman to me. "It would not be the same thing; all is so much changed." They read with great pleasure the debate on Denmark in the House of Lords. "It was the old Norse blood," they said, "which ran so hotly on that evening."

Our route up to this point (Korsör) has

been easy and direct enough, and so indeed it promises to be throughout. We slept here last night, and this morning our steamboat leaves for Als at 10 A.M. I have got up early to finish this letter to you, and breakfast before starting must now be attended to.

LETTER III.

Sönderborg, 21 March, 1864.

Our journey from Korsör to Als was prosperous. The sea, well-beloved of the Danes, was propitious to us as being their friends, and spread herself out before us in the smoothest of good humours. We carried with us some eighty or one hundred soldiers, in high spirits, poor fellows, and rejoicing over each beat of the slow old engines which brought us nearer to Als and to war. There was great cheering and waving of caps as we moved out of harbour, which was always renewed whenever a passing fishing-boat, or

the sight of any living creature, gave a pretext for it.

We soon made friends with some of the soldiers who crowded the fore part of the ship, and began to find out how large a part of the interest of camp life here will belong to them. Brave, simple-minded fellows, taken from all the trades of the country — from the plough and the workshop — carpenters, shipwrights, masons, fishermen — they bring all their honest industry to their new profession, and without leaving behind them the memory of home and family, are to a man joyously willing to be led against their traditional enemy the German. Their home feelings are very strong; the larger part of them are married, and the liveliest moment of excitement which we experience here in Sönderborg, is when the post comes in, bringing with it its many hundred letters for the army.

Last night, as I sat writing, the rush of

many feet beneath my window made me believe that some movement must be taking place in the front; but on inquiry I found out that the post had just arrived. You will not be much surpised at this interest in the doings of the post-office, when I tell you that there is probably not a single soldier in the whole army who cannot read and write. To the very last, home and home loves cling to them. Mr. ——, one of our English colony, told me to-day that when he was in the Lazaretto at Augustenborg, a soldier who was dying, begged that a lock of hair, which he had cut from the head of one of his children, and which he had always carried in his knapsack, should be placed in a letter and returned to his wife. Poor thing! she will not be the only wife to weep over some such token of affection which will find its way from the seat of war.

Our passage between the islands of Fünen on our right, and Thuro and Taasinge on our

left, with Langeland lying beyond, was very beautiful. .. These low-coasted islands wear a look of happy contentment, and their neat fields, trim cottages, all tell the same story of prospering country life. Here and there a slight gully, or I should rather say a dimple in the coast running down towards the sea leads the eye somewhat further inland, tempting one to follow and explore its windings much in the same way as do the little paths which go curling up into a great wood out of the dusty high road along which one travels.

Svendborg, at which we stopped—thereby causing great excitement to its inhabitants who hastened to crowd the small wooden pier, and to our soldiers on board, whose enthusiasm and cheering found a sympathetic audience — has placed itself most picturesquely at the extreme corner of a winding fiord. As we steamed up this fiord the little town gave us several different and

somewhat coquettish views of herself; and indeed she showed herself to us at the best and fullest advantage only as we passed on and left her.

We had on board several Swedish as well as Danish officers. Very kind and pleasant were they all to us; pleasant as long as we bore each other company on board ship, and kind in helping us to make our arrangements to reach Sönderborg, and find head quarters when we landed. Of the two nations, I am inclined to think that the Swedes are the better officers. This may be because the army is much more of a profession in Sweden than in Denmark; but partly also because there are certain military qualities in the one character which are not in the other.

When, in writing to you the other day, I drew a comparison between the English and Danish characters, I should have added that the Dane had remained truer to the old type,

and had retained a larger share of the primitive virtues. We have lost by our mixture of blood, and by our life of great cities, much which the Dane with his purer blood and his agricultural life has retained; and for that loss, the happiness of the body of our people has suffered. But, on the other hand, we have gained that restlessness, that adventure, and that energy, which has covered the sea with fleets, colonized great empires, and made us what we are;—qualities necessary to greatness, and the want of which has left the Danes at the present moment with no defence between them and their enemies but their own bravery. You may balance the loss and gain for yourself. The Danes have been—alas! I scarcely dare write are—the happier, we are the more powerful nation. But of the inner and social state of the country I intend writing to you on another day, and so shall say no more at present.

The Swedes, individually, have behaved

generously to Denmark in this hour of her need. I am told that 1,500 men and officers have volunteered into her service. As a nation, in despite of the wishes of the King, they have but little improved upon the conduct of England which has deserted a kindred race in the hour of its utmost need.

I was much pleased at being able to do a small service for one of the Swedish officers, though it cost me almost nothing. He had broken his only eyeglass, which in the case of a short-sighted man means a condition of misery too hopeless to be described. Out of a large provision of eyeglasses which I carried with me, I was able to restore him to sight.

His brother, who accompanied him, took some time and trouble in winning his way amongst the soldiers. "It is only by doing so," he said, "that I can hope to make the men depend on, and follow me. I am a stranger to them, and must do all that I can to attach them to me."

The enthusiasm of the men—supported on this occasion, I am bound to say, by their well-filled bottles of schnapps*—had tired out the sun, and even when it was sinking was still fresh and noisy. They laughed, they danced, they shouted, but above all they sang together. From "morn till dewy eve" they sang without flagging or failing—their patriotism not caring to replace the two or three national songs which engaged their energies throughout the whole day. They were greatly pleased with the presence of the Swedish officers on board ship, and collecting under the quarter-deck they cheered them heartily. The Swedish officer of whom I have spoken took off his cap, made them a speech, and then going down amongst them

* This somewhat excusable occasion was the only one—excepting that of a solitary soldier—during my stay in the Danish camp on which I saw schnapps exerting any undue influence. The striking sobriety of the Danish army has been fully attested by the letters of all the English correspondents.

took one of their song books from them and led their singing himself. It was well done, and the effect among the men was very perceptible.

We could not steam right up to Sönderborg, for the port there is sealed out of respect to the Prussian batteries; so we ran into the great harbour of Hörup, which is land-locked on every side, and threading our way amongst numberless transports came to our moorings by the side of a small wooden pier. We slept on board that night, and early on the next morning, having procured a sort of *char-à-bancs* by the exertions of one of the Danish officers, we started for Sönderborg.

The scene was animated. The little Dannebrog, for which we already have an affection, was fluttering among the forest of masts which grew out of the bay; flat-bottomed row-boats, piled so high as to appear mere masses of floating straw, were busy finding their way to

the diminutive piers; while on the shore itself the horses were struggling in the deep sandy road with ammunition trains and waggons laden with military stores; and the soldiers, our fellow-travellers of the day before, were already mounted on their artillery horses who required every encouragement to drag the field-pieces up the incline which faced us. It was pleasant to notice, as I have since had further opportunities of doing, the gentle treatment of their horses, and I might add of all animals by the Danes. In the midst of the confusion I did not see any one of the men strike their horses; and indeed it seemed to me that they were able to rouse them quite effectually by the mere sound of whip and voice.

Five miles to Sönderborg: and as the road is in good order, we do it in about the hour, notwithstanding delays from troops, who are in possession of the road but who allow us to pass them with greater ease than we have any

right to expect. The communications from Hörup to the front seem to me to be kept in good order, and are not dependent upon one road alone. Everything which we pass becomes more and more significant of the end of our journey; we creep in and out of all the different *matériel* of war jostling its way like ourselves amongst men on foot and mounted dragoons; and we meet a car of wounded who are recovering and are on their way to Hörup to be removed to the Fünen or Copenhagen hospitals, so as to make place for the more urgent cases with which such affairs as that of the other day (the 17th) fill the hospitals on the spot.

As each turn of the road presents us with some such sight, we feel that our initiation into camp life is already begun. Soon we find the soldiers' huts lining both sides of the road. They consist simply of planks sloped towards each other at the top, in the form of a triangle, but they are neatly and firmly

put together. At the bottom, mud and straw are piled up to the height of some feet to keep out the wet and the cold. Between the huts the muskets and bayonets are stacked, and are not, I venture to think, improved by the constant exposure. The camp fires are alight; the savoury business of cooking is already begun; the blue smoke is curling upwards, suiting its own leisure about it; men off duty are sauntering about; a knot of them are collected together, watching some rough trial of strength; and the picturesque part of life under canvass is hourly unfolding itself to us.

We soon find our way to head-quarters, and present our letters of introduction. There is no change in the pleasant feeling and courtesy with which we are received. At Copenhagen or at Alsen, in the street or on the steamboat, the same kindness befriends us. We are presented with a pass, which makes us free to come and go over the bridge

to Dybböl, and opens to us all the forts at any hour of the day or night at which we choose to visit them. We then receive a billet upon a house, which has been an hotel, but is now in a state of interregnum—the new proprietor being evidently of opinion that the profits to be made during a campaign do not counterbalance the risk of Prussian shells, and preferring to remain with less income but greater safety in Jutland.

All the officers on the staff seem to talk English or French, or both, and our ignorance of the language of the country places fewer barriers between ourselves and the pleasant acquaintances which we are forming, than it would in the case of other nations. I have never met the officers of any army who have impressed me so favourably as the Danish officers are constantly doing. They have all the deep-set qualities of the northern character, those which as Englishmen we are able to appreciate; and lightly thrown over

these, they have what is so rare amongst ourselves, a grace and an ease which is purely continental, and which has the most winning effect, as it shades off and softens the frank and honest nature which lies beneath.

I find myself, however, recurring to this "one constant theme" with considerable reluctance; for as you are not here to see for yourself, you will be suspecting that some of this at least must exist in my own fancy, and that all these qualities and this charming character are but a day-dream of mine. To-morrow I shall use my keenest powers of observation, in the hope of finding something to criticise in my friends, if only for the sake of providing you with a contrast.

LETTER IV.

Sönderborg, 22 March, 1864.

I am going to describe to you the room in which we live, and the ways of our little English colony which is planted in the midst of Sönderborg. Our room has all the dangerous comforts of a Capua. It has two beds, two washing-stands, an old sofa, a window that opens and shuts, and many other luxuries. After our often-repeated resolutions never to grumble at any hardships which fortune might have in keeping for us, after all our preparations, our carpet with the oil-cloth for camping out, our one tin-pot for preparing whatever the hour might provide for dinner,

our soup in lozenges, our beef in smoke, our chocolate in cakes, my leather suit, which in the innocence of my calculations was destined under the roughest of circumstances to have kept me as safe as a tortoise in his shell, it is in our less sober moments almost mortifying to find ourselves so comfortably established, and deprived of any excitement about where to sleep and what to eat.

Having mentioned my leather suit to you—although I am telling a story against myself—I feel bound to confess that it has attracted considerable attention; and I begin to entertain grave doubts about its respectability, since it cannot lay claim, as a traveller's dress should do equally with the proverbial woman, to "the high praise of never being talked about." I have had, however, no choice about wearing it, since we have come encumbered with only our knapsacks and one very small portmanteau, a large part of which was taken up by the great mountain of smoked beef.

This portmanteau to our great discomfiture, went astray, and has only just reappeared.

A good many jokes, but all in good-nature, are made by the officers at the expense of this leather suit, and it has earned for me the name of Robinson Crusoe. It has, however, its use, for if such a thing was wanted, it would at once furnish me with a passport of introduction to the soldiers in camp, for it is to them an object of ceaseless wonderment. On the smallest pretence they will come up with the *naïve* simplicity of a child and feel and stroke it, wondering what it is, and, I believe also, at what the man can be inside of it. It would be simply impossible to take offence at anything they do or say, for their manner is the very furthest removed from any sort of rudeness; and whilst they are as curious as children, they are quiet and respectful, and full of a rough, though genuine courtesy. One of them, the other day, re-

marked to his companion, after looking attentiuely at me for some time, that if he had my coat he should make it into shoes; and they have christened me, amongst themselves, by the mysteriously sounding name of "the leathern man." As you may easily suppose, I would gladly have avoided this distinction, and would much rather have not helped to confirm the reputation of my countrymen for eccentricity of dress; and when I next go campaigning, unless it be at the Cape or in Australia, where this dress is commonly worn, whatever shooting attire I may wear, I shall avoid all suits of leather. Moreover, in meeting the staff, except in the open air, I am sometimes burdened even here with a comic sense of impropriety about it.

With this comfortable roof over our heads, there yet remains some excitement about dinner. Our English colony numbers some six or seven. The literary element, and "the idlers," as the former are pleased to call us,

being mixed in about equal proportions. Amongst the latter, and deservedly a great favourite with us all, is an English major, who attracts our admiration by having brought his son, who is just at the outset of his military career, to serve his apprenticeship and take a practical lesson in war. We are in no want of the elements of social agreeability. One of our party supplies a bright and pleasant imagination, another philosophic consideration, a third such powers of conversation as leave to us but "few brilliant flashes of silence," a fourth—a Dane—the most unvarying kindness and good nature, which is never exhausted by the services which we constantly call upon him to perform for us as interpreter, or by the attacks which some of us delight in levelling at the Danish newspaper of which he is the representative. Thanks to all these different qualities, we form, as you see, a pleasant party; and it is seldom that our evening circle is not

reinforced by the good company of some Danish or Swedish officers.

Our landlady insists strongly upon our not multiplying our numbers, and on our drawing a veil between our dinner arrangements and the many fasting persons who daily prowl about Sönderborg *quærentes quid devorent;* but none of our party have yet acquired a sufficient degree of selfishness to prevent their often introducing *à huis clos* a military friend. There is a limit, however, which is very little elastic, and that is the quantity of meat which can be provided against our hungry return at six o'clock; and it has more than once happened that, like schoolboys, we have all eyed most voraciously the last piece in the platter.

Since the reappearance of the missing portmanteau, "the mountain of smoked beef" has added considerably to our resources; but it has not become popular, principally from the fact of the lovely Paulina, our Zingari

attendant (I write her down gipsy on the authority of one of our party), having, when it first appeared, turned up her nose at it, and called it "pferde-fleisch." A suggestion which, from our enjoyment at the present moment of plenty, has unfortunately not been combated as warmly as in prudence it should have been considering that possibly when shelled out of Sönderborg we may be entirely dependent on "our Hamburg mountain."

The lovely Paulina, to whom I have alluded, is a feature of the place, to which full justice must be done. Abler pens than mine have already immortalised her, as you may have seen, but for all that I cannot pass her over. She is a young lady of considerable attractions, as is not only acknowledged by our colony, but also by officers and men, and the whole male population of Sönderborg. Amongst the other half of the inhabitants she is not so popular, and Marie, who presides at the "Holsteiniches Haus," is heard,

I believe, at times to say some very unkindly things about her. Paulina's friends declare that this is because Marie has lost her own front teeth; but, personally, I do not venture to adjudicate on the value of Marie's statements.

Numerous as are Paulina's admirers, she seems to me to be equally indifferent and light-handed with them all; and I am much inclined to believe that, as one of us says, "her head is master of her heart." If there *is* a soft place in her heart, I am inclined to believe that it belongs to one of our party, who, though the oldest and most experienced amongst us, has not escaped from the "*verfluchtenen Augen*," as he calls them, of the "Katze" and the "Schlange;" and is constantly making us laugh by his wish to feed and to dress Paulina properly, and to parboil her overworked hands, and then present her to those who had never seen Cinderella as she once was in the ashes.

I am afraid that no canvass or brush of mine will serve to reproduce for you the original. She is dark, with a rare rich colour flooding her swarthy cheek; her gipsy eyes have any expression that they choose to wear for the moment; they can look fierce or soft, demure or wicked, and as in the song,—

> She is a maiden fair to see,
> She can both false and friendly be.*

Whatever she be, Gipsy, German, or Dane, she has strange ways with a certain attractiveness about them, like that which belongs to some little beast snared in the wilds of the desert, which although grown fearless of man's voice and eye, yet keeps wayward memories of its former wandering

* Poor Paulina! her character and all that belongs to her has not simplified the time-old riddle, which the one half of humanity has ever propounded for the guessing of the other. I have since seen in the letters from Alsen that during the bombardment of Sönderborg and the dangerous days which succeeded it, she remained fearlessly at her post, and took charge of the deserted hotel, which as if protected by her courage escaped the Prussian shells.

existence. In all her movements, she has peculiar lithesomeness and flexibility. She turns, and glides, and serpentines into the room in a way fully to deserve the name of "Schlange." Her hands follow her other motions with the same ease and lightness. She lets them fall close to her side, or folds them across her breast, or enlaces them coquettishly with each other; but her grace never deserts her.

But with Paulina, as in all cases, the fatal gift of beauty brings with it certain drawbacks. Each of our party in turn volunteers to call her (bells not being in existence) when any want arises, and but too often as our patience fails us, and a second jealous volunteer goes to look after the first, the latter is discovered at the head of the stairs engaged in carrying on an animated conversation with Paulina, on the subject of coals, or candles, or any other domestic pretext which may legitimately protract the conversation.

I think that I shall always look back with a peculiar kind of pleasure to the evenings of our little English colony. Even our little differences of opinion will come back to my mind with a certain "tenderness of memory" about them. Somewhere, away in the future, it will seem so pleasant to have talked over the events and excitements of the day, to have compared notes as to our different experiences, to have joined together in our sympathy, to have wrangled over each other's criticisms, to have proposed plans for the next day, to have discussed the advisability of a battery here or an intrenchment there, and, in short, to have given ourselves up keenly and entirely to the military life which surrounded us, while all this was lightened and leavened by those pleasant officers and gentlemen, whose presence throws a glow over our meetings, and whom, from day to day, we never know if we shall see again.

LETTER V.

Sönderborg, 23 March, 1864.

I am going at once to discharge a duty and give you a slight sketch of the town in which we live, and of the forts which defend us, and of what the army which defends the forts has been and is doing. Sönderborg—our town—has contrived to plant itself in that picturesque position which I have before noticed in the case of other townlets in Denmark. The Sund, the Als Sund, divides as you recollect the island of Als from the mainland of Slesvig. It is something like a serpent in appearance, with its body rather straightly poised upon its curling tail; the

body, as you see, gradually broadening as it reaches northwards. At the southern extremity, or at the tail of the serpent, the two opposite coasts rise with some abruptness and are so much drawn together as to leave but a thread of water of 130 yards in breadth between them. It is here that Sönderborg has crept into the breast of the hill on the Als side, and that two bridges, one made of fishing smacks and the other of pontoons, connect Als and Denmark with the last little bit of Slesvig which is still left to them.

The lot of Sönderborg has fallen in fair lines. I know few more attractive and brighter views anywhere than those with which it sometimes arrests our wanderings along the Als bank of the Sund. A bold bend of the Sund places in a corner between flood and hill the little town, grouped in a mass of red which is browned and softened into many pleasant tones. It has a quiet cosy look as it clings to the hol-

low of the hill, and rambles down close to the water's edge; and it seems to be still thinking of nothing but its peaceful occupations, though the skeleton of yonder vessel and the timber-yard hard-by are silent and deserted. From here, where no sound or sign of war reaches, it seems altogether no other than it has once been, and undisturbed by the flight of wanton shells which the Prussians poured into it the other day it basks pleasantly in the sun, alas! only too confident that the innocence and happiness of its past are a shelter against the rough storm overhead. Above, on the crest of the hill, four or five windmills throw out their ungainly arms, as if they were sorcerers busily weaving for the safety of the hamlet a charm "of waving hands," or champions offering to do battle for it. Alas! what charm or challenge will protect poor Sönderborg? and it is always with a heavy heart, as we turn from her nestling warmly against the hill and giving herself so willingly

up to looking pretty and pleasing our idle eye, that we recollect that her feet are resting on that silver serpent, and she herself is clinging to that height, which has been, and must be again, disputed by the cannon of contending armies.

As to the history of the army being encamped here you know nearly as much as I can tell you. After the disastrous affair of the Dannewerke, which is still as iron to the soul of many of the officers and which I am afraid will make them cling to the Dybböl forts even when the position becomes untenable and ought to be abandoned, the greater part of the troops were embarked and transported here and to Fünen. I do not think that in England you ever knew how much suffering accompanied that retreat, and how it as the sheer staunchness of the soldiers which prevented an overwhelming disaster. The adverse circumstances under which it was conducted, the previous fatigues of the men, the lighter

condition of the pursuers who left behind them knapsacks and other encumbrances, and the pitiless weather, will find for it a place in military history, which in the longest campaign has but seldom to chronicle a movement of this kind executed successfully. An English captain,* in command of a transport steamer on that occasion, told me that as the men touched the deck of his vessel, they fell down where they stood, overburdened with sleep, and utterly regardless of the bitter cold and the snow which was falling; their endurance having been wrought up so as to bear them to the end of their painful march, but not one step further.

Shining luminously out of this silent heroism of which you heard little, there was one bright moment in that time of suffering. It was when the first regiment turned to bay at Oversö,

* I have lately seen that the hospitality which was once kindly offered to me by this gentleman, has been since extended to others of our English colony in a time of greater need.

covered the retreat of the army, and gave their own lives for the common safety. They threw themselves into the gap with the same devotion as that of the "three hundred" of old; and though I believe the roots of this regiment struck deeper into the educated circles of society than those of any other, though each German bullet that flew true to its mark on that day rent the happiness of some family in Copenhagen, though that regiment was known and dear to its country as would be the regiment of volunteers from either of our Universities, and though like our Six Hundred it brought but one-third of its numbers out of the destruction, it paid a price which was not too high for the glory of the sacrifice. Of them it might have been written:—

"They are gone to their graves grim and gory,
The beautiful, brave, and bold;
But out of the darkness and desolation
Of the mourning heart of a widow'd nation,
Their memory waketh an exultation!
Yea, so long as a babe shall be born,
Or a man shall be left in the land;

As long as a blade of corn
Shall be reapt by a human hand:
So long, so long, even so,
Shall the glory of those remain
Who that day in battle were slain." *

When the army first found shelter behind the Dybböl lines, the Prussians, with that same delay and hesitation which so often restrains an army from following up its success and plucking the fruit which is within its grasp, followed at its leisure and entered Flensburg. One of their earliest movements was to occupy the Broager peninsular, which they did by throwing a bridge over the narrowest part of the Egen-sund. Here you will see at once by the map, as the Danes held the neck of land which joins this peninsula with the main land, that could the bridge be destroyed, those Prussian troops which had crossed would be fairly snared without possibility of retreat. It was with that object that Rolf Krake fought her first duel with

* Owen Meredith.

the land batteries, and made it unfortunately clear to the Prussians who had regarded her with considerable fear and superstition, that she was quite as capable of receiving as of inflicting injury. The bridge was protected by the winding shore, and she was obliged to retire content with what she had dealt to and taken from the batteries.

Soon after this—still in February—the Prussians, determined to secure their peninsula and to have its neck in their own undisturbed possession, made a forward movement and drove the Danes out of the woods of Stenderup and Böffel, which, as you will see, lie between the villages of Nyböl and Dybböl, as they confront each other. This was the first closing of the semicircle upon the Dybböl forts; and it leads me to make a remark upon a fault, which has in my opinion dogged the whole course of Danish tactics.

The whole course of the war hitherto has

necessarily been a succession of retirings on our side. Position after position, without any choice in the matter, has had to be abandoned. Unfortunately on these occasions though yielding to the necessity the Danes have not been able to withstand the temptation of striking a blow: this blow has done a good deal of mischief, but rather to themselves than to the enemy; for it has never been a serious one, as they could not run the risk of making it so, and consequently it has inspired one army with a feeling of success, and the other with that of failure. It has been the blow of a man, struck as he steps backward; a blow, which the science of striking blows condemns as spending the strength of one combatant and inflicting little injury on the other. The resolute temper of the Dane is ill-pleased at not attempting to hold any ground which offers itself; but this is no excuse for the mistake which has been committed at the Dannewerke, before Dybböl, at Veile where

considerable preparations were made to defend a position which ought not to have been held, and before Fredericia. It is in this fighting and withdrawing that the Danes have lost so many prisoners, and it ought to be remembered that the loss of prisoners is a bad thing for the *morale* of an army, which can better afford to have its numbers thinned by losses in action, than in this other apparently more harmless way. Moreover, the Danes do not show well in these skirmishes, which are generally decided by the efficiency of the tirailleurs, for they are slow and heavy in this important part of war and provided with a very inferior weapon.

The next advance of the Prussians was on the 17th of March; a day on which some hard fighting took place. Dybböl village was taken by the Prussians, re-occupied by the Danes, and finally at the close of the day remained in the hands of the former. On the same day the hill called Avnbjerg by the Danes, and

I believe Ruhenberg by the Germans, was also lost. Both of them ought, in my opinion, to have been given up without fighting; they are both too far from the protection of our line of forts to be held as outposts by a small army which may not run the risk of throwing out strong supports and bringing on a general engagement. Be this however as it may, we have certainly done wrong now in allowing the enemy to enjoy the possession he has obtained undisturbed by our shot and shell. They are centres of danger, which, as everybody knows, will not fail presently in showing their teeth.

I have now to describe to you our military position, which I shall do without reserve, as this letter will not pass through the hands of German postmasters who have opened some of the letters of one of our friends; and I have as much reliance in your discretion as Danish courtesy has in mine.* We have spent

* I take this opportunity to remark, that we were very careful never to allow any letter containing military information to pass through the German post.

the last two days in very carefully examining the position, and our opinion is, and it is also I believe the opinion of every Englishman here, that it is most uncomfortably weak, and could be taken at any moment by a rush of troops. It has one advantage, that of its sea communication; but beyond that it has not one element of strength. I will give as shortly as I can a sketch of our position. Glancing at the map you will see that opposite Sönderborg the main land pushes out a somewhat heavy and awkward corner. This corner belongs to us, and our guarantee of possession is a chain of forts drawn across it from the Venning Bond to the Als Sund, including Dybböl Mill, but leaving both the villages of East and West Dybböl on the outside. East Dybböl I should tell you is levelled to the ground; West Dybböl is the village of which I have been lately speaking, and which is in the hands of the enemy.

Immediately opposite Sönderborg, the tip

of this corner of Slesvig rises at first rather sharply, ascends more gently as it broadens, finds its highest level at the mill, and then descends sharply, breaking itself as it does so into several globes or small bosoms of land. It is at that point, crowning each globe with the largest of our batteries, that our zone of forts is laid. The forts altogether number ten.

This position may appear formidable on paper, but if so, it is the only place where it does; not even, I am afraid, excluding Dybböl churchyard, from which the Prussians survey it at their leisure. I shrewdly suspect, indeed, that what this dropping fire through the day means, is that they are soothing and playing with our attention, before they suddenly unhood and throw off their storming columns upon us.

But as to the faults of our position: first, we oppose a narrow to a broad front, so that a most withering semicircle of fire can be

brought against us. At the same time, as you see, the Broager batteries enfilade the whole position, and may be increased to any number on our left front or on our left rear. In No. II. we have two 12-pounders (1756 and 1767 I think are their dates) which have been rifled in Copenhagen, with which we occasionally whistle our defiance at Broager; and this is all that we can do. But the evil does not consist in our being unable to answer the Broager batteries. Our forts were built with no shelter from this quarter, since danger from artillery at a distance of 1½ or 1⅝ miles found no place in the innocent calculations of the engineer who constructed these forts after '52. Whatever protection there happens to be from the Broager side, is accidental and very insufficient. Moreover shelter of any kind will altogether be wanting, if the evil days of a real cannonade are reserved for us. Our engineer, not unnaturally, made his calculations from the amount of resist-

ance which was required against the old smooth bore; the consequence is, that with the greater piercing power which the rifled cannon possesses, the blockhouses are likely to become the graves of all living who go into them. That of No. II. is already in ruins, eleven men having been killed and twenty wounded by one shell which fell into it, and though the other blockhouses are being strengthened, they are of a construction totally unfit for such storms as modern artillery can pour upon them.* In No. VI. the only shelter against the Broager batteries, besides the blockhouse, is a traverse which slopes at an angle of about

* The correspondent of the *Times* belonging to the Prussian camp has remarked, since the storming of the Dybböl entrenchments, upon the poverty of shelter in the forts,—I have had no exact information on the subject, but I have reason for believing that not a single blockhouse remained, in which men were allowed to enter towards the end of the bombardment; be this as it may, the exposure of the Danish soldiérs and their sufferings for want of proper shelter have been in my opinion unequalled by those of any other garrison. An old system of defence, and a new one of artillery, even where the combatants were equally matched in other respects, would be sufficient to inflict upon the besieged unusual losses.

fifty-five degrees, an inclination which at a guess I should think would not be very far from that of the shell itself. In every respect of shelter, I consider the forts as one and all of the most flimsy character. "Flimsy" was the word used to me by one of our English colony when he accompanied me in my first day's survey, and flimsy is the only word to which they are rightfully entitled.

But it is not merely in the matter of shelter —the first requisite of good earthworks—that they are so deplorably deficient, but also in matters of defence. There is no revetment to the counterscarp; the depth of the ditch is a child's leap; no part of the line is properly flanked by the other; the rise of these mounds is in many parts too steep to become a glacis for the play of the guns, and not steep enough to break the rush of the storming party; and though you may find it as difficult to believe as I find it sad to write, the

forts are in many places connected with *long*, *straight* and *dead* stretches of breastwork, with no ditch in front, and which neither you nor your horse would have the slightest difficulty in clearing. The formidable inner intrenchments and second line of defences are as much produced out of the depths of German consciousness, as are the wolf-traps, the snares, the ingenious devices, and scientific works with which their newspapers have surrounded this place. In Hamburg we bought a map of the seat of war, in which the Dybböl line of forts was scored three deep with a profusion of red ink, which very much amused the officers at Head-quarters, though as we laughed we were obliged to confess that we were doing so at our own expense. Unfortunately the spade is not in my opinion doing its duty; and though here and there it is throwing up a battery, I see no real change in the condition of the defences, or any sign of such a memorable use

as Todleben extracted from the breathing-time which the Allies gave him.

But we have other weak points. The Prussians are in possession of the western bank of the Sund, and we have a long line to defend, stretching from our girdle of forts right up to Arnkielsore. This is a constant danger and irritation, as it employs a large part of our small numbers at such a distance that they can be of no service to us should the attack be made upon our front. The Prussians however as yet are not fond of expeditions by water, and so perhaps the danger is less than it seems to those of us who are lookers-on at this game.

I have finished my hasty sketch of our position. I have not told you what is my opinion alone, but that of others, some of whom have been here for many days past. At the same time I am bound to tell you that an officer, whose opinion was quoted in the *Times*, and who paid these works a visit,

described the position as possessing great strength; but what made him do so is a constant source of marvel to some of us here. On the other hand, our English major, who is here at present, and who has a remarkably keen military eye, would I believe confirm every word which I have written; and I do not believe that there is any doubt or discussion on the subject amongst any members of our colony. The expression which one of us used the other day in conversation was, that "neither French nor Austrian would draw a parallel before such a place; and that if regular siege operations are commenced, when the Prussians get it into their hands, they will be heartily ashamed of having waited so long before it." It has, in German papers, been called a Danish Sebastopol. When Sebastopol, with its massive earthworks, its blockhouses sunk in the great parapets, its triumphs of engineering skill, and Todleben to defend it, comes to be com-

pared with yonder row of ill-constructed, ill-sheltered, and ill-connected mounds, we may feel flattered at the compliment, and not attempt to criticise it; but I confess to you that all these formidable defences are not raised by us, but by our enemies.

LETTER VI.

Sönderborg, 24 March, 1864.

As I take up my pen I am obliged to lay it down again. The reliefs on their way up to the forts are marching past my window. Sometimes rising above, and again almost falling under the tramp of their feet, my favourite song "Den tappre land soldat," is chanted all along the column; its words now lost to the ear, and now ringing out into the night air with a fierce distinctiveness. I never can resist that song and that tread as they go cheerily forth together; down goes paper and pen, knife and fork, or whatever may be the occupation of the moment, and

we gather round the window to watch our friends going up to their duty, singing as good soldiers should, and carrying with them cheery hearts, and a great store of grim determination under those dark blue coats. We have not enough music here; the band, which is not good, plays but for a short time in the evening; and with the real side of war so constantly staring us in the face, we cannot afford to be without that gay and pictorial side, of which good bands form so large a part. It is to be remembered that these little things affect the spirits of soldiers in camp; and it is only when the spirits of the men are high pitched, that you may hope to see them do brilliantly the tasks you set. With these men, however, the want of military music is less felt than it would be with the soldiers of other nations; there is a rude vein of music deep set in their nature, which not only finds its expansion in these national and warlike songs, but is also reached and

thrilled by the voice of war itself. I have never seen soldiers who carried more grim enjoyment into war than these men; they have shaken off their former depression, and they seem to be discovering a rude harmony between something in themselves—perhaps old breathings of the Norse spirit—and all that which now surrounds them. There are emotions floating on the breast of all men which are touched by the first notes of a military band; but lower down, and only in the breast of some, is there that bass-chord which leaps up and answers the passionate challenge which rolls out of the deep-throated guns.

I am often led to wish that we taught our men in England to sing in the ranks, and on the line of march; for in this way a soldier carries his music with him to shorten the miles, and lighten the dangers of his day's work.

As for these brave fellows here, they have

every need, God help them! of staunch and cheerful hearts. I described to you the other day the position which we hold; its weakness and its strength, batteries and intrenchments, bridges and observatories, lines of communication and points to be guarded; but I said nothing to you of the feelings with which we look on our position.

We are, as you know, outnumbered; we cannot stop the gaps which daily losses inflict on us; we are overmatched; we but seldom attempt even to pretend to answer the crushing discharges of the Prussian artillery; we are placed at the caprice of our enemy, who may attack us to-day, to-night, to-morrow, on our front or on our flank as the humour takes him. As I showed you in my letter of the other day, from week to week the enemy has been closing like the irresistible advance of the sea upon us, and some few hundred yards in front of our batteries is all the territory that we can now call our own. We have not men enough to

venture to hold any outpost of which the enemy has determined to take possession; and we cannot afford to make sallies to disturb him in his possession of it.

Every day we feel the meshes of the net being drawn closer around us, and nearly every morning discloses to us the ugly growth of some new earthwork in our front, which will soon become a new hornet's nest to sting us. In every direction new links of that fiery chain are being forged which will one day fill with flame and smoke this little atom of land which is our last foot-hold of Slesvig terirtory. It is true that at present we are able to repair the damage done to us in the day by active spade-work in the night, and this has been the case when we have had an unfortunate day, such as to-day, in which every gun in No. II. was dismounted; but that which weighs so heavily upon us, is the feeling that the Prussians at present are playing with us as a cat does with a mouse; that they are

leisurely bringing up the whole mass of their great guns; that every day they are marking out sites and turning the first sod of new batteries which are to enclose us in a ring of destruction; and that meanwhile and for the moment they make an artillery study of us, for the advantage of their commission of officers who are said to assemble daily at the Broager batteries.

You cannot easily conceive how irritating and depressing this is; into the forts the men must go to be fired at from about 10 in the morning until towards evening, the Prussians become satisfied with their day's mischief, and leave us undisturbed except by a few sullen shots in the night; while no fort except occasionally the much-enduring No. II., with its two pop-guns, makes any reply. Then our daily casualties, though now very much reduced in number, have been eating into our small army, and making gaps which we have no means of replacing. These

losses are to me the saddest part of the war. I grudge sorely these brave fellows who drop killed by some unlucky shell, with no one to know or to care about their fall, except wife or child, who from that day henceforward will hope in vain for any answer to their letters; and I am constantly thinking what cheerfulness and what constancy is represented by each of those lives which must remain for ever unrecorded, since they have been lost in no battle or even skirmish of which you or any other will hear.

But it is not the hardship of bearing the enemy's fire in silence, or of seeing his earthworks growing round us, whilst we must remain in our trenches, without exposing him to sally or to skirmish; or of seeing those fall whom we cannot replace—for already military necessities have drained the strength and manhood out of Denmark; or of guarding the long range of the Als Sund; or of ceaseless

repairs in the night-time; or the nervous irritation of false alarms: it is not any one of these things which, in itself, is the trial of our position. But it is the feeling, which is well-known to the army, that we are placed here in a hopeless, desperate position, to fill a gap and to complete a sacrifice. We put it out of mind when all is going well, as it is at the present time and when we are recovering from the depressing effects of a long series of ill-successes; but even now, at this moment, every soldier in this army has a consciousness, even when he is singing his favourite song, "Now shall we again with Prussians fight," that his country is requiring a certain thing of him, and that is to stand and when the hour strikes to fall at his post. It is a fearful thing when an army, the very pith and marrow of a country, with the one purpose of saving honour, of fulfilling a tradition old as the race itself, and handing

down that tradition* to the next generation, as they themselves received it,—with this one purpose and in sheer desperation of all others places itself in the path of destruction; when that army, men and officers, gravely and deliberately set themselves to complete a sacrifice; and even though I recollect that out of such heroic devotion springs that which makes a nation worthy of existence, and that so are purchased for those who come after virtues without which life itself would not be endurable, you may yet easily realise how bitter it is at times for a by-stander to move amongst these men, and to see and to know all this.

I will not, however, let the cloud, which must occasionally come over us here as we think about these things, cast its gloom over

* A tradition,—which has descended in an unbroken line from the days of the ancient Danish King, who "refused life upon any, even the most honourable terms; because life with all its old enjoyments, but with the sentiment of a single defeat, would be unbearable." See *The Early and Middle Ages of England*, Pearson, p. 104.

the whole of my letter to you. Those by whom I am surrounded never complain, and I at least, as their friend, difficult as it may be, will try and maintain the same stoicism. If I do but partially succeed in doing it, you must lay some of the blame to the account of that German sentimentalism which has driven us into this corner, and threatens us with all these evils. As long as it amused itself with the sorrows of Werther; as long as it clothed itself in Werther's blue coat with brass buttons; as long as it contented itself with singings and weepings over the Fatherland, and expended its energies in Turners and Vereins,—it at least injured no one, and left the peace of the world undisturbed; but when this sentimentalism grows sick for desire of Naboth's vineyard; when it requires to be petted and kept alive by the ruin and destruction of another country; when, for the gratification of its whim, it does not hesitate to kindle war in Europe,

its character becomes so noxious that it ceases to amuse. It is hard for us to stand behind these feeble earthworks and be pelted with shells, because fortune has made us the readiest victim of such a tyrannical caprice. But I will not add another word of complaint.

I have been for some time wishing to give you a little sketch of Danish country life ever since I have visited some of the houses of the pastors in this neighbourhood, and the great farming establishment of Herr Rosen,* and I will devote the end of my letter to that purpose. In most instances, I should tell you, the pastor's house is a farm in itself. These worthy men do not restrict their occupation to the church and the school, but they labour also to make the fields bring forth abundantly. You must not think that

* The name of Rosen will be sadly familiar to those who have read the recent letters of the *Times* correspondent from Alsen. This family, like many another, has paid down all that men can give—their property and their life. Brave Major Rosen! I ought not to let one regret escape from me on account of his soldier's death.

from this their other duties are neglected, but you must remember that these duties are far lighter and more pleasant than those which fall to the share of our country clergymen. There are very few, if indeed any, poor in the agricultural districts here; the whole country, as I have before told you, wears but one look of happy content and plenty, and its real condition is expressed by its look. Its neat villages, houses, farm-buildings, peasant's cottages; its well-kept yards, and fields, and hedges; its clean cultivation and good roads; all its brightness and its trimness satisfy the first glance that those two evils, "low wages" and "want of employment," which have ravaged so many of our English districts, have never gained a footing here or been able to plant that colony of vices which so quickly follows in their footsteps. It is one of the pleasantest features in Denmark that you may travel through its country and its towns and not be asked for alms by a single beggar.

There is a mingled system here of labour employed by large farmers, and of peasant proprietorship. I am inclined to believe that the combination works happily for the general good. By the well-to-do condition of the peasant-proprietors, a high standard of comfort is held up before the eyes of the labouring population, and is in consequence generally insisted upon by them; while, on the other hand, the economic as well as the political disadvantages of a country being parcelled out into the hands of one poor class, do not exist. This is my impression from what I have seen; but my experience, as yet, is not sufficient to justify anything beyond a mere impression.

The first peculiarity about the pastor's house which catches the eye, is the great, deep roof of thatch, almost burying the long and low front, which has only just space enough left to it to look cheerfully out from under its warm shelter. I have seen nowhere such

depth and prodigality of straw used for thatch-work, except perhaps on the Indian bungalows, where it is employed for the same reason, to make those who are inside independent in their own atmosphere of what the weather chooses to do or to be on the outside. But whether it be as a cloak against the monsoon and that implacable sun, under whose burning "the heaven becomes as brass over the head, and the earth as iron under the feet," or against the breath of the northern icebergs, there is no shelter so trusty and so pleasant as that which is to be found under the depth and weight of these great straw roofs. They have also a warm-hearted look, which makes one suspect that the comfort within is deepened, and lies the more snug and hearty under all that mass of covering, just as you sometimes see a peculiar look of joviality looking out from under a broad-brimmed hat; and you might safely swear that inside there dwelt no churl's

heart, and that, though you were a stranger on the threshold, you might boldly venture to claim hospitality.

But I have not yet finished scanning all that is to be noticed on the outside, and there is much that claims attention before I pass within and exchange greeting with the kind pastor and his wife. I am standing in the garden and looking to the south front of the house, where the sitting-rooms are placed. The north of the house is sheltered by the farm-buildings, and it is to that side that you drive up; but the charm and pleasantness of the house is all reserved for the south and for the sun. In this grey climate they love the sun too well ever to look away from him when he shines on them, and neither pastor, farmer, nor peasant will live in a room which looks to the comfortless north. They have never yet forgotten their old love and reverence for Baldr, "the sun-god," the darling of gods, of heroes, and of nature, at whose

death, and not before, "the sword age" and "the wolf age" found courage to creep over the earth.

As you stand in the garden, there are signs around you to show that there are many things trained to enjoy the pleasant noon-day sun. A neatly-arranged trellis-work guides the creeper as it climbs amongst the windows and doors, which open to the ground; through that window I can see not only flowers but young trees, such as stand in the courts of Spanish houses. There is no bird-cage in which a prisoner flutters out its existence, for the wild birds of the garden are taken into friendship, and boxes are hung here and there upon the trees, in which they make their nests, wisely confiding in the kindness which invites them. The flower-garden is neatly kept; but the English impatience of a garden, which is all flower-beds, shows itself most unmistakeably in the grass lawn, with its goodly allowance of walking-

space, and in the little copse with its curling paths and tiny pool of water, all of which are included in the garden fence.

As we enter the house we are most kindly greeted; with that greeting which seems to be at once commanded either in the pastor's or the farmer's house, or wherever we go, by the word stranger. One of our party introduces us, and, although an acquaintance and an intimate of the family, his friends share freely in the kindness which awaits himself. We ask to be allowed to see the house, and to our surprise we are taken through three or four rooms which are all sitting-rooms of a moderate size, quietly but very cheerfully furnished. The last room leads into the pastor's study, which is ribbed on all sides with well filled book-shelves in a way familiar to an English eye.

As we pass through the rooms, all I suppose devoted to social purposes out of respect to the sun, I notice that one of the smallest

of these rooms—that whose opened window from the garden had seemed filled with green —is a little garden in itself, fresh and fragrant with flowers and young trees placed in pots. In each room little refinements—which grow as kindly under this great comfortable roof, and in this quiet country spot, as in any country home in England—and various objects of taste are constantly claiming attention. The piano, of excellent tone and quality, as indeed it ought to be to do justice to the light, good touch with which it is familiar; the prints on the wall; the photograph album on the table; the family group in crayon; the French, English, and German books, (peaceably mixed together, and forming, with the Danish, a happy family of international literature) all show us that, in a manner almost typical of Danish character, there is a peculiar grace and culture which has twined itself around and grown up under the simple but firmly built and solid exterior.

I shall better explain what I mean by this contrast of external strength with the refinement which is sheltered under it, if I describe to you the farmhouse of Herr Rosen. Workmanlike and perfect as are most of the buildings which one sees in this district, Herr Rosen's farm is the king of all farmhouses. I must tell you that Danish masonry is of so high an order as to possess a real beauty. The Danes seem to me, as I observed in another letter, to have no architectural talent as we understand the word; that is to say, I see nothing to admire in their churches or palaces, or public buildings. But with them, as with all nations, the art of building has become to a certain degree expressive of their life and character. If from the tent of the roving nation up to the colosseums of the imperial, or the cathedrals of the devout, there exists any analogy between the structure and the man himself; if ever it is allowed to read in stone a certain

expression of an age or a race, it is here that I would claim the right to do so. In this country the man is in his character strictly agricultural—it is in the cultivation of the soil that the industry and energy of the Danes are peculiarly absorbed, and it is, I maintain, in consequence of this, following and obeying the tendency of his character, that the art of building reaches with him its highest point when it serves agricultural purposes. It is in raising these farmhouses that the art of building in Denmark has found its strength and beauty, has developed and perfected itself.

The buildings of Herr Rosen's farm enclose a large oblong space, with one side left open. As we walk up to the farmhouse our eye is instantly arrested with the character, I may almost say beauty, of the brick-work. Each brick is perfect in its shape and fitted to a hair-breadth in its niche, and the whole seems not only massive and compact, but so smooth

and perfectly finished that you would be content to leave it uncovered and allow it to form the inner walls of your house. The deep sweeping roof which rests on these walls I need not again describe to you; it is weightier, even in proportion, than that which crowned the pastor's house. As I look up its sloping side I am able to see how deep the layers of straw are piled the one upon the other, by the circular gashes which are cut into it, and which form the low brow of the sleeping-rooms of the family.

When we paid a visit to his farm the kind and hospitable Herr Rosen received us at the threshold, led us within, brought from the cellar a choice bottle, and, upon our absolute refusal to allow the seal of a second to be disturbed, took us over the lordly buildings in which the fat and riches of the land were stored. We followed him through the long line of stalls in which 230 or 250 cows were waiting to be milked—

through the stable, which was filled by his twenty stout farm horses; through the houses in which the ewes and their lambs were kept sheltered as long as the winter cold lingered; through the great barn, in which nearly 200 soldiers who were billeted upon him lived and slept, and not one of whom had given him the slightest cause of complaint; over the sleeping bodies of these military guests, and under the capacious roof which is destined to hold the goodly incomings of the harvest; through the lofty and fragrant dairy, where a hundred shallow vessels were yellow with the rising cream; and so cheerily and pleasantly on through all the different storehouses and buildings which are necessary for the work of wringing out from the soil and for harbouring all the goodness which it yields.

I saw no sign of steam-ploughs, or of the more modern improvements. Little, I think, is known of them. The science of agriculture

is not, I should say, carried to any high point, but—a consideration of even greater importance—the practice has not been allowed to lag behind the science. In some parts of the country I have seen the strangest old ploughs, which are only less old than those you see in India, where the natives of the present day make use of the same instrument which turned over the fallow lands of that country in Alexander's time; but I have never seen any field or farm here which was otherwise than well and neatly cultivated. I wish that it was possible to say the same thing of England, and that fields with rushes instead of grass, and weeds instead of corn, did not come back reproachfully to my memory. Is it not in these places, as in the proper haunts for it, that our agricultural distress takes its strongest hold?

I must, however, break violently off from all such philosophic considerations, for the hour of knife and fork has struck, and Pau-

lina—if I rightly interpret the witch's gestures as she stands in the doorway—is telling me that the beefsteak is rapidly disappearing under the hungry attentions bestowed upon it, and that if I stay writing, I shall be obliged to dine off the " pferde-fleisch."

P. S.—I come back to add, that Paulina, dear creature, has actually kept a piece of beefsteak in reserve for me down-stairs. A care of my interests which, I flatter myself, decides the point in argument last night as to which of the party is the young lady's favourite.

LETTER VII.

Sönderborg, 25 March, 1864.

I have described to you our position; I have given you a slight sketch of our past history; I have taken you into the country with me to the farmer's and the pastor's house; I have shown you our every evening fireside and our social circle, and now I intend to ask you to look for a few minutes at the inside of one of the forts, whose guns grin so quietly down those slopes of Dybböl, upon which the flood of war must one day be poured.

On the left of the line (as you see in the map, stands No. II., the hero at present of all

the forts, since every day he has the honour of having a large number of Prussian shells pitched into him, which are fast knocking his blockhouse into a shapeless heap of sand and timbers. Yesterday, "the coffin," as this battery is somewhat ominously called by the soldiers, had 230 fresh nails driven into it in the shape of that number of shells which came true to their mark from the Broager batteries. I do not know what was the total number of shells fired yesterday at us; but a register is kept of these unpleasant intruders on our side of the water, and we find that our daily dose of them varies from 400 to 1,000. The casualties are, I am glad to say, inconsiderable; sometimes amounting to four or five wounded, sometimes dwindling down to one or two.* The other day 1,000 shells were fired at us, and when at last the Prus-

* The reason of the small number of casualties at that time was the cessation of fire during the nights, which permitted the constant repair of such shelter as the forts afforded.

sian guns grew tired of barking, and became silent, not a man had been wounded, and not a gun dismounted. On the other hand, there have been days which are to be scored with charcoal instead of chalk; one shell alone, the first which pierced the blockhouse of No. II., having as I told you fallen into the midst of men who imagined themselves in safety, and to use Mr. ——'s expression, "simply killing as many as it pleased."

It is No. II. to which I wish to introduce you for a few minutes to-day, and before going further, let me observe that under the lazy fire of this morning you will run very little risk in doing so; and that this is a matter in which none of us are as indifferent as our literary friends here suppose us to be. We have had a great argument and dispute on this point recently. It is true that under the guidance of my companion, who knows the forts by heart, some of us go "under fire" occasionally, as the ex-

pression goes, though it would be more correct to say, "under shelter;" but we never stay long when we do go, we take great care of ourselves when we are there, and we have certain rules to prevent any of those batteries which attract the Prussian firing from becoming "a morning lounge." We go "under shelter," as I said, on certain rare occasions, but what three Englishmen—for we have lately become three—of whom two have been soldiers, would come to camp for a fortnight's holiday, and not do the same? We are all of us well aware that in danger, however slight it be, there is a certain seriousness; but I much doubt if any man yet has got up from the ground after holding his breath whilst a shell burst somewhere near him, a worse man than he was before he laid himself down. But you shall come into No. II. and judge for yourself, if there is not some other feeling besides that of "idle curiosity" which may tempt a second visit.

We follow this trench along which, under shelter of a breastwork, some three or four companies are lying. The men look comfortable enough, half buried in the deep straw, some sleeping, some reading, some smoking; but from all those who are awake we get a cheery "good dag" as we pass. We stop for a minute or two to exchange a few words of greeting with a group of officers who seem to have contrived for themselves the cosiest of corners, but one which though sheltered from wind and weather was unpleasantly visited a few moments since by a careless or malicious shell, which had wandered out of the usual line of fire. A torn stem close to their head was, however, all the mischief done. They show us the register of shots fired, and we make a note of it for the information of friends at home.

At the end of the trench there is an open bit of ground between it and No. II. You must take a long breath and get over it as

quickly as you can, for it is an unsheltered spot, and it would be uncomfortable as well as unlucky to be caught by a shell in crossing it. The men in the trench have raised themselves up from the straw, and are watching you with some interest, ready to give you the cry of warning should it be needed. The Prussians, however, are firing lazily, and in a very few seconds you reach the fort without any undue excitement. Over the drawbridge and round the corner, and you are fairly in brave No. II., which every day eats Prussian shells with the same appetite as a child would eat sugar-plums. Your reception from officers and men is hearty, and the privilege of shells in expectancy makes you shake hands perhaps a little more profusely than you do on other occasions. You take the opportunity of a good glance at the little fort. It has some five or six guns—out of which our two friends before-mentioned, 1756 and 1767, are the only guns which utter a protest for

us against the four batteries of the Prussians across the water. I have sometimes seen our shells burst to all appearance just over the Prussian batteries; but I am much afraid that our artillery practice is looked upon with some contempt by the enemy, who himself is in possession of the most efficient ordnance and artillerymen. But, as our part is to be shot at, we must not complain, nor have we any right to expect that these two little toys will seriously affect our big enemy.

The blockhouse is, as you see, pretty much in the state which I described, looking singularly ragged and unhappy; the powder magazine is let into a traverse; it is the best piece of work in the fort, and it is buried so safely under a mass of earth, that the shells may play without harm all day long upon its back if they please. The parapet is but a thin, shallow defence, and will not stand hammering; although as you see there is

enough good shelter under it for a small party of men at present, as the enemy has never yet brought the real weight of his artillery to bear against our earthworks, and he considerately allows us every night to repair and rearrange for him his artillery target. One gun has been dismounted this morning, and looks piteously useless with a leg in the air—but, "decket," cries the lookout man (which sounds strangely like our "duck") and you must finish the rest of your observations presently. Down we all go under the parapet together, looking and feeling very much like a covey of partridges under the nose of a double-barrelled gun. For a second you hear nothing, but you will not have your patience tried by any long waiting. This second of silence, in which perhaps you are beginning to flatter yourself that it may be a false alarm, gradually gives way to a sound which is forcing itself through the sky. It is neither a hiss

nor a scream, but rather an angry and jagged rending of the air, that is like a serpent fighting his way towards you.

Here I beg to suspend your shell over your head for a few moments whilst I make a remark upon it. You are very safe under the parapet, and may listen at your ease. Now I have somewhat elaborately commenced describing this shell to you, and I intend to be some time longer engaged in doing so. To soldiers who have been born under the star of Mars, and have seen thousands of these creatures of war, a shell must be a shell, and nothing more, and possessed of as little excitement when in the air or on the ground, as when having spent its fury it has broken itself into a certain number of ill-shapen pieces. But for me, I am free to confess, a shell has a considerable interest; I have found him a poetic fellow, with touches of grim humour and a good deal of quaint picturesqueness about him; and so because he is fami-

liar to many of us, I do not intend to be cheated out of describing him to you in full, and detailing all his actions.

But I have kept you for some time under the parapet, after promising that you should not have long to wait, and I will now let him drop without further delay. As he comes down upon you, lower and lower, closer and closer, the feeling of expectation becomes keenly intense. A curiously electric sympathy seems to spring up between you and the man who crouches next to you; arm to arm, body to body, you press against each other, and in that moment of strong nervous pressure, you feel that between him and you a brotherhood which will never be expressed in words has grown into life. Then a sense of oppression passes over you; there is a spasm in the air, and with a most spiteful cry the demon rushes past, strikes full in the centre of the blockhouse, buries himself for an instant, then breaks into

a legion of twenty little lesser demons, which all go hurtling forwards and upwards in the air, in the centre of a column of sand and splintered wood, each on his own evil errand. It is all over; there is the same sense of relief as when a thunder cloud is discharged, and we all unbend ourselves, nod congratulations, and if it is your first shell, you take off your cap and bow in the direction where it passed; a very homely joke, which at once secures you the affection of the soldiers.

You did not notice it, perhaps, as you bent down, but that brave fellow who is standing by us, placed himself gravely and quietly before you at the last instant as the shell was falling. Once when one of our party tried to take the outside place, and to push the men inside of him, they murmured loudly at what "the Englander" was doing, and in the moment's contest the shell had a somewhat fairer opportunity than usual of being mis-

chievous. Soon again comes the warning cry; this time the shell strikes the parapet, the most dangerous place of all, for should it strike near the edge it may crush its way through and surprise those who are under it. This time you are covered with sand, and you take a little longer in assuring yourself that all is well over; the next flies whirringly over the fort; the next and the next bury themselves harmlessly in the great bed of the block-house; but each and all are treated with the same constant cheerfulness and fortitude by these brave fellows, who wait here through the long dreary hours of the day, until the time comes round for the Prussians to give up annoying us and to betake themselves to supper and to bed; and who experience no other variety or excitement than that which a shell now on the parapet, now in the block-house, now over their heads, may afford. After what you have seen, do you think it altogether strange that some of us should have the

wish to share for a very few minutes with them that which they have to go through during these long hours; or that sometimes in leaving No. II. there is an almost reproachful feeling in turning the back on these brave quiet fellows and the dangers which are left to them, and a vague longing, which at odd moments in the day and far away in the quiet country, will force itself upwards, to be with them once more?

Now that we have safely finished our investigations of No. II., we will place ourselves in no more exposed situations, but will finish the morning by a walk round the outposts. This can be done without any danger, as the wanton exchange of shots which used to go on has now come to an end. "Soldiers will always learn," remarks Major ——, as we tramp along, "that this is an amusement which is carried on entirely at their own expense; and after a time they will be more anxious to make friends with each other than to keep

watching for any little bit of blue cloth which shows itself over the shelter of the rifle pit." I am glad to say, that up to the present time the amenities of war have not been disregarded, and the dead or wounded in either camp have been treated with respect and kindness. I believe that this is the case with our enemy, and I can vouch for it on our side.

In some respects, however, grave exceptions are to be made. There is a very bitter feeling here about the conduct of the allies before Fredericia, who have made such use of the system of forced-labour, that not only peasants but even students of a theological college have been compelled to work in the trenches under the fire of their own countrymen. Nor, as yet, has all indignation worn itself off from the recollection of that score of shells which some days since quite suddenly, and without any notice, came buzzing about the ears of

the inhabitants of Sönderborg.* The good-nature of the Danes is willing to put it down as an accident, and to believe that the Prussians are sorry for it; but a few more such evidences of disregard for the usages of war and the lives of civilians, and the Prussians would then become guilty of embittering the terms on which the strife is at present conducted. Our position, outnumbered and overmatched in every respect, is sufficiently

* That this first bombardment of Sönderborg was not accidental (as we charitably supposed) has been since known by the account given of it by the *Times* correspondent on the Prussian side. It was as thoroughly without excuse or defence as the second bombardment, which—placing aside all consideration of civilians, women and children—was an act of great cruelty, since it compelled the wounded lying in hospital to be rudely taken from their beds, and to be carried out of the town, under fire and at night, when no arrangement and no provision had been made for them. This, even without the peculiar and perfect intelligence which he possessed of all that passed at Sönderborg, must have been known to the Prussian Commander-in-chief. I have drawn my pen scrupulously through personal incidents which relate to Prussians or Prussian manners, and I do not wish to increase in any way the soreness which at the present moment may exist individually between Prussians and Englishmen, but on points of public or military conduct I have not observed and shall not observe silence.

painful to save us from needless provocation of this kind. It would, however, take much to drive the Danes into acts of reprisals, for with them tolerance and goodnature are carried to a fault.

There are now living, quietly and undisturbed, in Sönderborg, men who are known to be German sympathisers. The other day, on showing to a Danish officer a letter of introduction addressed to a gentleman in Sönderborg, he shrugged his shoulders, and simply said, "I believe he is a very respectable man, though a friend to the Germans." Yet these are the men who are painted as "tyrants" in the Duchies.

As we walk past the rifle pits we throw the cheery "good dag" at the men, and get the same back in kind. Some of their rifles are sighted and laid ready in rest, giving us a warning of how thin a nature is the truce which allows us to be taking this morning walk. My friend occupies the post of honour

on the Prussian side, and in this order we arrive at the ruins of East Dybböl, which has been levelled but not I think sufficiently to prevent riflemen from finding shelter in it at some future day, whenever the tide of war shall fairly set in and close around us. The three or four comfortable farmhouses of which it consisted have been amongst the earliest sufferers, but will be by no means the last, to exchange their smiling look of repose and plenty for the ruined and tangled desolation which has now taken possession of them.

The Prussian outposts are as yet at a respectable distance from us. The nearest that we can see are more than 300 yards off, a distance at which men walking singly are very safe in my opinion (which is combated by my companions) even from the *zündnadel gewehr*, which is certainly a very efficient weapon. One great advantage which it has is, that no cap is required—a great

point in cold or wet weather. As for the long distances at which these and other military rifles are sighted, it takes a great many bullets in my belief to kill every man who falls at over 200 yards. The French Emperor is said to have felt this so strongly at the commencement of the Italian campaign, that he made a very sweeping alteration in the sights of his soldiers' rifles. The temptation to be trying long shots, wastes powder, makes the men unsteady, and does little harm to the enemy.

I suppose there is always something alluring in forbidden ground. Those fields which stretch away before our outposts, and which can only be invaded at the certainty of drawing down upon oneself a practical experiment of the accuracy of the *zündnadel gewehr* at long range, have a strange attraction about them which other fields have not. We have none of us the slightest intention of taking a step in that direction, but I have

more sympathy than I used to have with the child in the story, who is told not to go into a particular field, or cross a certain brook, and is obliged every day, poor little wretch, to see this forbidden region of mysteries lying temptingly before him.

Our walk is, however, ended, for it is time to be turning home, as we design an expedition into the country this afternoon.

LETTER VIII.

Sönderborg, 26 March, 1864.

Our life just at present has become a piece of somewhat dull-coloured guesswork. We guess in the morning, as we sit at breakfast; we guess as we stroll over the bridge; as we walk among the batteries that guard the Als Sund, and frown defiance at any Prussian projects of rafts or pontoons; we guess as we sit talking after dinner; and last of all, when our friends have left us, we employ the first few minutes of drowsy bed-time in making the last guesses of the night. We are fairly walking, feeding, sleeping upon guesses. No matter what happens in the day, we are always guessing; if the shells begin to flit faster than

usual upon us from the Broager batteries; or if they lose anything of their customary activity; if the weather is fine and the nights moon-lit; or if rain threatens, and the moon loses her way among the clouds, we are still faithful to our one employment—we still continue guessing.

But all this is rather wearisome. Soldier-craft may be, as our Duke described it, guessing on one side of the hill what the enemy is doing on the other; but then we have no hill over which or round which we can ever steal a glance, as I suppose the Duke occasionally did, to see what our guesses are worth. We are quite shut out here from any knowledge of what the enemy is doing. I do not believe that we have any system of spies, and unless we can put ourselves in communication with the fish of the sea or the fowl of the air, I am unable to conjecture by what means we shall gain intelligence.

As we are so much in the dark, you may possibly be better able to conjecture what the enemy is doing than we are. What is the meaning of this fitful cannonade? Why on one day should we be dosed with 400, and on the next with 1,000 iron boluses? Why does he give us time and rest to patch and to cobble at night all the rents and ragged places he has made in the day? Is he waiting for more monster guns, and are these fresh disturbers of our peace now being dragged wearily along heavy roads by men and horses? Is he not yet contented with the batteries he has planted, and does he wish that every bluff and every knoll should suddenly start to life, and literally bury us under a storm of shot and shell? With the guns he has already in position, he could, if he chose, render useless these flimsy earthworks, and make our glacis, as far as guns are concerned, safe walking for his troops. Is it that this cannonade is a feint,

intended to lull suspicion to sleep, and that his heart is set on a piece of sheer fighting, which shall win the Dybböl heights before its guns are silenced or its breastworks torn? Or can it be that this is not simply a soldier's game, and that those who hold the threads are not encamped on Broager Land, but sit in council chambers some hundreds of miles away from here?

But whatever is really moving the pieces on the enemy's side of the chess-board, all that we have to do is to dance attendance and follow suit. If the enemy is making his preparations, we too have plenty of occupation for pickaxe and spade; if he stirs amongst those grey woods which cover the rising upland in front of our position, we have brave hearts here and strong hands which clutch the bayonet firmer at the thought of such a movement. Should he come like a thief in the night, I am well convinced that the thorny hedge which lines

our breastwork will be a braver defence to us than ever, these flimsy earthworks can be against his cannon, and that it will not bend, though it may be broken, trampled down, overborne by the weight which can be thrown on a line so finely drawn as is the case with our small army. At night, and it is at night that we expect these attacks, those bayonets are a comfortable thought, and I turn confidently over to sleep when I think of those who are watching between me and the enemy.

These, however, are times of comparative repose; our men are recruiting from the hard work which they have had, and they are fit for any call which may be made upon them. When, however, our enemy shakes off his drowsiness, presses us on all sides, allows us neither to rest by day nor by night, pours upon us one continuous discharge from those hundred guns, which are beginning to yawn upon us from all quarters, our dangers will

begin, and our little army may give way as it did when it occupied the Dannewerke, broken by sheer fatigue. My one hope upon the subject is that the Prussians may before that hour grow weary of watching the outside of our forts, and one day make such a dash at them as shall throw to us the most glorious gage of battle which was ever set down between two contending nations.

But into the future we can see just as little as we can into the woods of Stenderup or Böffel, where at this moment our enemy may be either massing his columns or cooking his dinner, according to his own plans for passing the day; and so in default of any knowledge, we go on guessing all round the weary circle, though each link of it comes back to us with the familiarity of an old friend.

Last night I strolled out after dinner, and, waylaid by the fanciful moon, found myself wandering among the lime trees which shelter

the graves in the churchyard from the rough play of the upland winds. I stand upon the graves and look down at the one common bed in which are buried friend and foe. Here, under my feet, Dane and German are both passing into the same clay. Over them, upon the freshly-turned earth, falls that strange network of light and shade, blending together in the same truce as that which now enfolds the bodies lying below. The trees are standing apart, and the moon, young in her night-travels, shines transversely through them. They bend their heads together, and their boughs, twisted and wreathed into strange cabalistic meanings, hold up against the light a tracing clear as if cut in steel. I can believe that any character belongs to these great tall figures. They are masquers at a masque, standing up for the dance, and stretching out their ungainly hands to one another; they are conspirators bending their heads together and speaking in broken breath;

they are mourners, troubled with a ceaseless sighing and sorrow; they are chieftains in council, or warriors who meet for midnight war.

I pass further from them, freeing myself from their influence, which is not without a certain sense of oppression, and I gain a spot where I enter, as it were, the sleeping chamber of the beautiful Venning Bond and see her dreaming before me. There is no sign or sound on any side, and in this absence of life I could believe that it was for me alone that the veil is stript; for me alone that she lies breathing in her beauty.

Shall I be false to this confidence of nature if I tell you what I see? Each minute that I stand rooted to the spot the moon floats higher through the blue, and soon will trail her golden mantle after her, right athwart from the one cliff to the other, across the fiord which ripples at my feet. Not a cloud pauses on the water, except the dark line of

shadow which follows the cliff, and which is blurred and confused with it into one broad band, dividing water and sky, and preventing the one from descending sheer into the bosom of the other, as it lies and languidly looks up to it. Into that sable hem, as if swept off by the light fingers of the night-wind from the silver pavement of the fiord below and from the hanging vault above, the darkness of the night collects itself, well content to find shelter in so congenial a spot. But while those cliffs stand sullenly aloof, all else seems to be at peace and happy with itself, free either to lie idle and dream, or to laugh and play as the little wavelets are doing which pout up their tiny mouths to be kissed by the growing light.

By a strong effort I break through the spell and turn away. Water and sky may woo each other in silence during the night, if they so choose it, but my presence shall disturb their courtship no longer, for I intend to pass up to the front, and pay a night-visit

to the forts. I dive down into a hollow, from which I quickly pass, and then again give myself up to the leading of the moon, who, lost for a few moments, now smiles on me as anew I regain her company, and we travel on together.

On either side of me are the huts of the soldiers. They are buried in the quiet of night, and the only form which I see is the one sentinel, who flits restlessly about the long rows of stacked bayonets, as if fearful lest some one should steal from his charge this one last and grim hope which remains to the Danes against their day of trouble. I incline from the road to my left, and cross a shallow intrenchment, which is filled with soldiers of the reserve. They look comfortable enough in their great coats and in the loose straw, which leaves little of them to be seen; and their look of complete repose, as they give themselves up to the deep warm sleep which is poured over them,

contrasts itself sharply in my mind with the fierce awakening which would follow the first shrill note of the alarm.

It is strange to me how many contrasts here are thrown across our path. It seems to be a favourite trick of war to place side by side those things which with an almost artistic arrangement contrast and relieve each other. As I wander on, my mind lingers over the scenes which during the last few days have chosen some such peculiar setting for themselves. I think of this morning when we sat on one of the bluffs of the Alsen coast, and watched the batteries of Broager Land plying their evil trade. The day was bright and clear, without one dark thought about it. In front of us, curling out from beyond the Broager peninsular, the coast-line of Slésvig passed reluctantly from our sight, tapering and lengthening out till it dwindled into a mere thread of somewhat darker blue than the sky and water which it parted; to our left lay

the leafless beach woods, breathing a purple atmosphere; to our right land and water again playfully advanced and receded, each invading, each retiring from the territory of the other; while over all was poured that beauty which at times seems so distinctly to acknowledge the hand which gave its form and colour.

Meanwhile, as we sat in that dreamy enjoyment, which makes life almost heavy with fragrance, the bluffs of Broager began silently throwing up little curls of white smoke; so soft and rich, so luxuriously white did that smoke appear, that it seemed to be the very spirit of the scene, to be dreamier and more peaceful than all the other nature which surrounded it. Slowly and gracefully we had time to see the smoke coiling and uncoiling itself in lazy forms, before the dull roar followed and the serpent-hiss came sawing its way to us through the air. Even that sound which accompanies

these hateful creatures on all their errands of evil, could scarcely persuade us that what we saw could mean danger or hurt of any kind. Far away as we were sitting, we could see the shower of sand thrown up as the shells exploded in the forts, but not even this was strong enough to conquer other associations and to complete the idea of war. I have heard of a beautiful air-ball, which is sometimes seen by miners floating through passages of foul air, and which, when touched by any hand that would grasp its rainbow colours, explodes with violence and scatters around it the death with which it is charged. Not less beautiful to the eye, or less malignant in their meaning, were the wreathes, and forms, and fancies of those thick creamy clouds of smoke.

But there was even a sharper contrast which I saw some days ago, of what Nature had intended to be beautiful, and the malice of man had distorted. We were paying fort

No. VI. a visit. The first or second shell which after our arrival pitched into the fort, struck the large solid timbers which formed the doorway of the block-house. A shower of splinters was hurled in all directions, and we were nodding congratulations to each other as we unbent ourselves from under the traverse, where with a party of officers we were all sitting for shelter, when a low moaning from behind the shattered timbers told us that some mischief had been done. Some of us pushed away the beams, and having got the poor fellow out, carried him to the surgeon's hut at the back of the fort.

The poor lad's face I shall never forget. Unlike nine out of ten of the soldiers he was very young. A boy, with a soft pretty face and womanly expression, just perhaps the one lad in the whole army who seemed to be unfit to suffer such a wrong. What could he, with his light hair and blue eyes, have to do with

war, or war with him? It seemed as if some cruel mistake had been made. War, relentless as it is, at least spares women and children, and yet there lay this child mangled and bleeding, and singled out for its victim rather than one of these burnt and bearded fellows, who at least have long since grown into sturdy manhood.

Poor lad! if one could rightly read that which flitted across the keen eager delicate face, there were bitter pictures of home and its thousand belongings, and of a boyhood fresh with pleasures which only one instant ago had been put aside for ever, crowding upon his mind and forcing from him more than any pain which he suffered a low continued moaning of despair.

But I was not destined to pursue any further the consideration of the contrasts of war; for I had by this time gained the breastwork which divides the forts. I passed into one of the batteries where the men were

busily employed in repairing what the Prussians had succeeded in injuring during the day, and well and actively the men worked, I thought, undisturbed by the twelve o'clock shell, which for some fancy or other the Prussians fire every night at the hour's stroke and which was just coming due. The figures in the moonlight, some scattered about the face of the block-house, some wheeling in new soil in handbarrows, some retrimming the parapet, to make it look gay and defiant for the next day, formed an effective group; and when at last the clock struck twelve, and the warning "decket" was given by the look-out, the rush and scramble, and general desertion of tools and wheelbarrows served considerably to enliven the picture. But what on earth, I said to myself, as I sauntered out of the fort, does this one shell in the hour mean? Why do they not fire a thousand every night into that one fort, or give up firing altogether?

As I wondered discontentedly over the one shell, I kept to my right, and gaining somewhat higher ground, walked up and looked over the low breastwork which connects two of the centre forts. The moon had now gained the middle heaven. Her walk had become statelier, and she had lost that innocence of look, which she seemed to me to wear when she first rose up before me, and dabbled the Venning Bond with silver; she had become hard and bold-faced, and was no more a timid maiden;

Incessu patuit dea.

She is shining strongly down the slopes which stretch before me, the slopes of our Dybböl forts; her light is so intense that it crisps and blanches the green grass below, while above it blots out the very stars with its shining. There is a baleful look in that flood of ghastly light which strangely disquiets me. What is that great sorceress of the sky

doing? Is she shining on the path of silent columns of the enemy, choosing and picking their way for them down in the tangled valley and up the smooth slope? And will her false light shine blindingly in the eyes of our brave men, and make them in the one fatal moment mislevel cannon and rifle?

There is something so painful in this silence, so cold and corpse-like in the outline of that wavy bosom of land, that some evil must be lurking near to us. Shall I shout to those sleeping soldiers, or force my way to that grim looking fort upon my left? No; they will only laugh at me as a dreamer, as one who has been star-gazing till his senses fail him, and yet—hark! they are firing on the outpost! Great Heaven! it is all too late. I can hear the rush of a thousand feet; they are crowding over the brow of the hill. Ah! I can see forced back, and fighting as they are carried on, the men of our own outpost; they are down and trampled under foot.

On, on, is pouring the unbroken wave. I can see the silent resolute faces of the foremost, as they bend forward in the race, with their hard grip upon the musket, and their light step scarcely crushing the dew out of the grass.

Perdition! are these Danes asleep? or are they false, and have they deserted their post? Ha! well done, brave gun! That rent must check the strongest stream that ever flowed. Are they still rushing to the front? Will nothing break that wave which is pouring over us? They are on all sides of us; the earth and the air is black with them; the ditch of the fort swallows them by hundreds, but they are never a man the less; they have thrown their ladders across; it is man to man, and bayonet to bayonet upon the parapet. Quicker! quicker! how slow the red bayonet is doing its work! Are these good hands tired yet? Is the steel that they hold grown blunt, can it drink no more blood? Their strength must not flag yet for long hours, for there

are a hundred fresh assailants pressing on, where but one has stood hitherto. Are they giving way, or is it that they draw back for one desperate rush that shall sweep the enemy off from breastwork and from parapet?

They have thrown down musket and bayonet, and there is little mercy or softness in that desperate grip which fastens itself on the neck or the throat or anywhere; there is no child's play now, but it is the convulsive efforts of men, fighting as wild beasts penned in a corner and savage with despair; well struck—that one brave fellow alone would save a fort. Ha! 'tis too late!—all is lost! They are pouring in like pent-up water, which sweeps everything before it. There is nothing that can stand against the fury with which that great wave, swelling as it goes, lashes itself onwards. It has passed on over the line of reserves, stubborn though they were, gulphing them down into itself and unchecked it

sweeps before it the second and third lines, under its sheer weight shattering and crumpling them up into a disorderly and entangled crowd. It is madness to stay; all is lost, and the only hope is yet to gain the *tête du pont.*

I throw myself among a small knot of Danes, who have made good their escape from the fort next to me, and, with enemies behind and enemies in front, we hold on our desperate path. We try to hew a way before us, fighting without checking speed, for to pause is death, but we are caught and borne on in the midst of a wild entangled multitude as if in the arms of a whirlwind.

Once there seems to be a momentary hope. Again a long but thin line spreads itself before the face of the advancing enemy, and the sharp check is felt right through to the very rear of the mass. But a storm of bullets scatters the thin resistance from our front, and its broken remains are rent to shreds as

the torrent washes over them. There is just perceptible a spasmodic jerk in the mass, as here and there a brave and desperately fighting man refuses to die beneath the stabs of twenty bayonets; but our speed is not checked, and the race has yet to be won.

Fortunately a cloud has settled on the moon, and our knot of Danes still escapes notice from the hurrying crowd in which they are entangled. Though it increases our danger, I notice that the Danes use their bayonet quietly but unsparingly, and more than one Prussian falls headlong forward from a quarter and a danger that he little dreads. It is strange how the fury and fear of the moment brings up out of one's nature the most cruel passions; and I see with a glow of pleasure the stealthy stabs which rob these men of their lives.

Suddenly, as I look over my left shoulder, I see the eye of a Dane set fiercely upon me and before I can make sign or cry to check

the fatal mistake, he strikes clumsily at me with his bayonet. I avoid the blow, but he gives me no opportunity for explanation, and strikes again at me. Fear has made me selfish, and with a curse on his perverseness I drive my short walking-stick straight and heavily in his face, and he goes down under the feet of those who press behind us. There need be no further fear from him; he will never rise again from under the feet which are trampling on him, and without further thought of his fate I look forward and try to recognise some landmark to know where our wild flight has carried us.

We are just entering the *tête du pont*, and the stream contracts, only to flow with greater violence and desperation through the gorge which now encloses it. There is no resistance; the surprise is as yet complete, and the enemy has only to cross the narrow stream of water which is girdled by the two open bridges before us. The boats rock violently beneath

us, but they are strongly linked together, and half the way is already won. In that moment there comes a blinding flash in our eyes, and with a roar, terrible as that of a lion seizing his prey, from the great batteries yawning above our heads, an irresistible destruction leaps down amongst us. The stout timbers start, and are crumpled like paper; the water flashes beneath our feet; it is terrible to die under our own guns; I feel myself struggling in the cold black tide which sweeps over my head, and.....

Gracious heavens! what a hideous dream! The parapet is firm under my touch; the men are sleeping round me; the moon sheds her ghastly light as complacently as she did before; there are no Prussians on the slope; Dybböl is neither lost nor won; and I have only been dreaming.*

* I feel as if I owe some apology for allowing this dream to retain its place in the midst of incidents belonging to real life. I have been advised by a friendly critic to draw my pen through it; but I have not done so, because it

I draw a deep breath of relief. With some effort the troubled brain frees itself from its fancies. It is a long minute before I shake off the unpleasant recollection of striking down that obstinate Dane who took me for a German. I could wash streams of German blood easier off my hand than that: but why think more of a dream?

I have never yet consented to share the creed of one of my friends, who believes that we are morally responsible for all that we do in our dreams, and that what we *do* do in our dreams, is only what in similar circumstances we *should* do in our waking moments. "It is only a matter of circumstance," says my friend; "it is only the difference between crimes committed and crimes intended, and there is

represents an idea which, as the genius loci, for ever haunted the Dybböl slopes, and seemed to delight in covering the hill-side with pictures of the wild rush of war. It would have been difficult to have leant against that breastwork at night, and to have prevented the eye from attempting to pierce the mysteries of the darkness, or the imagination from wandering into the future.

many a white-haired respectable member of society who walks about amongst us, who, in the world of dreams, has—and he knows it in his heart—committed every sin in the decalogue. He will never be placed before a jury of his countrymen, but for all that he is a thief, an adulterer, and a murderer. In each case his sleeping conscience struggled no less stoutly than his waking conscience would have done; and in each case the evil of his nature trampled it down into silence."

But if only for the sake of my last dream, "Heaven forfend!" say I; and to-morrow I shall pay more than full penance for my shadowy crime by a touch of rheumatism. The night is late; I will go back and dream more rationally in bed.

LETTER IX.

Sönderborg, 27 March, 1864.

Dinner or the lovely Paulina, or both, interrupted my letter of the other day, and I left undescribed—an important part of my visit to the pastor, and a characteristic feature of this country—the church. The parish church is throughout Denmark held in great esteem; it is well filled on Sundays and it is always I believe to be found in a state of good order and preservation. Indeed, it is only the exceeding neatness within and without which redeems it from actual ugliness. Its simple white and red give it a picturesque look in

the distance, but more than that I cannot find to say in favour of its appearance. A rather pretty and coquettish little spire sits lightly astride of its roof, whilst at some little distance, and entirely detached from the church, is a black, heavy-looking, and wooden bell tower—the campanile of the Italians. The churchyard was neat and well-kept, the graves being evidently cared for by tender hands. Little wooden palisades, about a foot high, toy-like and rather childish in appearance, fenced in some of the graves; some were half surrounded by a grotto of stones; others had flowers planted on them, and on some few—a sign that we have not yet escaped from the circle of war—the tiny Dannebrog fluttered.

The inside of the church looked bright and pleasant. The roof showed all its timbers, which were of polished fir, and well-fitted together, for the Danes are skilful workers in wood. Both as carpenters and shipwrights

they stand in good repute, as indeed they deserve to do in the matter of all the primitive trades. They have our own concentration of character, as I think I have before observed, and to whatever they put their hand, provided that you do not hurry them, that they do well. There is a strange memory, which history brings back to me, as I watch the quiet force of their character so completely absorbed in simple and rural occupations, of the time when the trade of war was the one channel in which all their energies flowed. There were no warriors in Europe that could cross swords successfully with those wandering Norsemen, who followed at random the various fortunes which led them into France, and Italy, and Sicily, and there gave them new homes; and though, now-a-days, the old spirit is sobered and tamed, and become the servant of the peaceful occupations to which their lives are devoted, yet it still breathes and moves, and can

again be called into existence from under the new surface which has grown over it.

I mentioned to you yesterday some of the little graces and refinements—flowers which bloom apart and only for themselves—of the pastor's house. The same description I should say, applies to the farmhouse of Herr Rosen, and, I believe, also to all the better farm-houses of the country. You do, indeed, detect the same taste, though gratified in plainer fashion, in the cottages of the peasants.

As I wandered, the other day, through the house of the pastor, noticing the belongings of each room, and the simple customs of the every-day life of the family, I fancied that I saw several civilisations battling together, and contending which should give the strongest colour to the ways and habits of this people who, while it receives from all, yet has so clearly marked an individuality of its own. I fancied that I saw considerable traces

of French taste in the choice of quiet colour; in the peculiar neatness in everything, from the dresses of the children—a large troop of boys, who were all remarkably well-clad—to the mere arrangement of the trifles lying on the table; in the square of carpet, showing the clean white boards beneath; in the ornaments scattered here and there, and the few pieces of china, petted and prized; and in the arrangement, which, while entirely free from display, yet put everything in its proper place, and obliged it to look its best. Then there was the German simpleness and domesticity, though with nothing *fâde* about it, but with a peculiar freshness and lightness of its own. The entire freedom from being waited on by servants, and the homeliness which almost made the servants part of the family; the love of plants, and beasts and birds; little touches of sentiment, though never amounting to sentimentalism; and lastly, some articles of ordinary use, such as the great china stove

or the china coffee-pot, were all things which I thought had strayed across the border, or at all events existed on the other side. Then more distinctly than in the case of French and German, I saw the reflection of our English civilisation. It was not so much in the furniture or in the arrangement of the rooms, though the cosy lining of the parson's study with his books was strangely familiar to an Oxford eye, or even in the free bath of air and light* which each room was allowed to enjoy, as in little touches of manner and habit. First and foremost is the shake of the hand which has all the meaning with them that it has with us, and, indeed, is given even more frequently. After dinner, each person shakes hands with the other, pronouncing some mystical word of greeting, which sounds to my

* I may mention here that our English love of cold water was not unknown to our Danish forefathers. Prof. Pearson has recorded the accusation brought against the Danes of winning "the affections of English ladies by combing their hair, by bathing once a week, by frequent changes of clothing, and such like frivolities."

ear like vel-be-kommen, but for the spelling of which I decline to be responsible.

But I pause on the point of commencing a list of small social matters, which discover our community of tastes, for I recollect that I have already written on this subject more than once, and it may have become as wearisome to you as it is interesting to me. My excuse for again alluding to it is, that this resemblance between us is constantly catching my eye in new trifles; and the more that I see of Denmark and the Danes the greater becomes my pleasure in tracing it.

It is strange to think that the battle of these civilisations is, after all, not merely figurative, and that in the interior of this pastor's house you can see the efforts which that of Germany is making to spread itself over this little strip of country and its islands. In my own opinion, Denmark has —I ask pardon of Germany for expressing so barbaric an idea—a healthier, happier,

and more strongly stamped civilisation of its own than any which is being offered to her. Whether, however, the two millions can resist the absorbing power of the forty millions, who are now aiding with rifled cannon the former peaceful invasion of the Duchies by china stoves and coffee-pots,—an invasion which was not sufficiently rapid or complete to satisfy the expansive views of Germany,—is a different question, and one on which I do not enter. It is sufficient to say that the humblest thing coming from Germany is not looked on with favour at present; that the Danes of the Duchies have become keenly aware that German civilisation in any form is in the hands of its unscrupulous promoters, like a snake taken into the folds of the garment; and that individually they are all prepared to resist its social encroachments.

But setting aside all comparisons of civilisations, I am often glad that the course of events has allowed me to give my sympathy,

free and undivided, to Denmark. The whole of this once complicated question has now at least simplified itself into a broad issue of right and wrong. There is no occasion now to trace Denmark through her difficulties during the last twelve years; to follow her, as under extreme pressure, she accepts vaguely-defined obligations; as she offers to the inhabitants of the Duchies equal and the same privileges as those enjoyed by her subjects in the kingdom proper (privileges against which the German powers protested in '52, for which in '64 according to their own declaration they take up arms); as she turns and betakes herself first to one just and reasonable scheme and then to another, only to find in each instance how fatally she has been entangled in the net spread for her; and, at the end, having been repeatedly foiled in her wish to cut off from her that which was not her own, and to keep that which was—for the German powers would not accept the entire separation of

Holstein, lest by so doing they should cut from under their feet this ground of interference—as she turns and kicks against the sharp points which goad her, and passes the fatal November constitution. There is no occasion now to consider how far that November constitution contained a violation of obligations undertaken, nor how far that violation was justified by the conduct of Germany who had strained those very obligations as much or more in the one direction, as at the last the Danes did in the other; all this, and the like, may now be put on one side; a sponge may be drawn across the past. The whole question is now stripped of all those legal subtleties which once helped to shelter the motives of Germany, and to bewilder the minds of lookers-on.

From the period of the negotiations which immediately preceded the invasion of Slesvig, the conduct and principles of the two antagonistic powers day by day defined them-

selves more clearly. If Denmark before this had at all gone wrong, every step which she has since taken, justifies herself and condemns her enemies. The two nations have latterly been acting in the light of day and under the eyes of Europe; and so clearly ever since Europe has been in a position to form a judgment has right been seen to be on the one side and wrong on the other, that Europe would have good reason to suspect that in the past events and transactions between the two countries, under all the German complications, the right and wrong were then, where they are now, and that the same character throughout, of aggressor and of victim, of wolf and of lamb, has been sustained by the same players. But although from the present you may read the past, leave the earlier history,* and keep your

* That "earlier history" has been nowhere put on record with greater clearness and brevity than in the well-known article on the subject, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review.*

eye on the last phases of this quarrel; on what we have seen for ourselves, the respective actions of the two countries during the last few months. The one has sought to avoid, the other to inflict war; the one to frame excuses for invasion, the other to remove them. The one has made concessions, the other has entered on a course of exactions which have been stimulated rather than satisfied by those concessions. Was the March patent objected to? it was withdrawn. Was a material guarantee required? Holstein was evacuated—even to the destruction of the fortified places of Rendsborg and Frederickstadt, which belonged to the defence of Slesvig. Was there still the grievance of the November constitution? the proper machinery for its repeal was offered to be at once placed in motion, and England as a pledge of Denmark's sincerity subscribed her name to the offer. But of what use was all this when Germany was determined to have war? At that moment

Austria and Prussia were bidding against each other for the leadership of the empire; and Denmark was a fitting victim to bear the costs of this rivalry. There was a great popular outcry throughout Germany, and it was too much to expect from either unscrupulous cabinet that it should have the courage to withstand the thousands of wild professors and students, who dream of carving German unity out of the destruction of Denmark, of founding a military empire on the victories to be gained over one and a-half millions* of people, and of harbours to be won and fleets to be built on conquered territory. Unfortunately revolution could nowhere find a safer outlet, nor could the popular excitement be guided elsewhere with the same profit, as into the rich Duchies of Denmark; and so, as often happens, the readiest thing at hand is sacrificed by those who fear for themselves, and whom that fear makes cruel and selfish.

* The population of Denmark without the Duchies.

But what is to be said of our conduct as a nation? I did not feel proud of it when I was in England, but my shame deepens as I pass through other countries. It is well for an Englishman, as he travels through Germany, if he understands no language but his own. The most undisguised contempt is poured upon us. We have not been liked for some time past in Prussia, but until the present we were at least respected.

Let me try and put before you something of that which I have heard from educated foreigners, not Danes, about our behaviour. "You in England," say my friends, "have taken up a neighbour's quarrel—you have taken the cards out of his hands, and played them for him—you have played them for him in such a way as to give all that his antagonist asked—you have made him separately and severally concede every point demanded—nowhere and at no moment has he refused to follow the course on which you have insisted,

or turned aside from the sacrifices which you have dictated; nor has he taken his cards back into his own hands until at the last moment, when you yourselves have thrown them up, and have left him alone and friendless to play the remnant of this miserable game out for himself. Is not this literally what you have done? I do not want to judge your conduct by what men think of it in Denmark—I am willing that it should stand on its trial in any court or country which you choose to name in Europe; but if at Vienna, at Berlin, at Paris, at Turin, or anywhere else out of England you choose, you find but one opinion, and that of such a sort, as would, could you hear it, disturb even your self esteem, are you willing to remain quite happy in your share of the past, and quite satisfied with what you have done? Are you quite sure that after all, these foreign nations who from different points of view have formed but one opinion about your writings and

your doings, are not as likely to be right as you who are judging from one point of view of what relates to yourselves? But granting that your own estimate of your conduct is the only one which is worth consulting, and that this easy condonation and approval of self is, after all, the best philosophy; yet even so, there are evil consequences which will flow from this undeserved loss of prestige which seems to weigh so lightly upon you. How do you look forward in expectation to those slight but significant symptoms which will soon mark the change of opinion towards you throughout Europe? Shall you—with the memory of what you have been—submit to receive such curt and chilling despatches, as Russia the other day addressed to some of the continental nations? Not six months will pass before you may count on receiving some such mortification. How have the interests of the world fared in your hands? Will it be no check to civilisation, that a treaty

signed with England's name is but a piece of waste paper? When you wish to sign another, how will you look those in the face who are joining in such a farce with you? Of what weight will your voice be hereafter in the councils of Europe to protest against a wrong, or to uphold a right? Of what value will be your seal? Why, even the voice and the seal of Prussia—whom you have been in the habit of calling fearful and selfish—will count for more than yours. Of what use now are you, or will you be henceforward in maintaining order in the great European family? You can have no external policy. Your Eastern, your Italian, your Grecian or your Portugese policy will break as a bubble beneath any finger which touches it. You may fight when your own possessions are threatened, but as a member of the European family, with a controlling voice in the interests and happiness of Christendom, you have vacated your place.

What right have you to do this? What right as a first class nation have you to try and free yourself from the obligations of your position? What right have you to say, 'I care not for the general good—let others toil and suffer whilst I grow rich;' and to attempt what individual men have vainly attempted to do, to isolate and to free themselves from the obligations of the society of which they form part? And you have done this at the very moment when a nobler part was unrolled before your feet than has ever been before those of another nation. It was no course of aggression, of military victories, or of high-coloured ideas, but a simple maintenance of what is just and right—of making those principles respected in you, and yourselves in them. Had you been determined that where your name and your honour was touched, a wrong should not be done, you would have stood as a beacon of light to the generation which is around you;

but with all your great qualities, with all your freedom, with all that drawing of the heart of those who suffer towards you, you have let golden opportunities slip through your fingers, you have stood aside from the stream and current of your age, and have chosen to become of no account in the fortunes of your fellow-men. Nor in all probability will peace be the reward of your peaceful policy. Some minister or people presuming on the past, will insult you, and you are still too proud a nation to bear without resenting it a national insult. You will then find yourselves engaged in some great war, standing alone and apart from the sympathy of Europe, and with the bitter reflection that this had been spared, had you known how to speak in season a few words of brave and honest meaning when the peace of Europe demanded it."

What can I say? What do you find to say in England? or are you silent as I am? That perhaps which mortifies one most

deeply, is the remembrance that twice, even without time to change our dresses, we have played the same character. There was but one feeling in England that we had either spoken too much or done too little for unhappy Poland; and yet loudly as we reproached ourselves, we were only repenting to be free to sin again. But the subject is hateful.

LETTER X.

Sönderborg, Easter Monday, 1864.

As if to place a white mark upon the last few days of our visit to the camp, we have had this morning a pretty little affair, of which I intend to send you an account, if I can banish from my brain the smoke and the noise and the excitement sufficiently to do so. As I have told you in other letters, we have had hitherto a very unsatisfactory part to play; a necessary but very depressing series of retreats; more than one withdrawal of our troops from the outlying positions which in reality belong to the defence of

Dybböl, but which from the smallness of our numbers, we have been obliged to give up to the enemy, and not to attempt to occupy; and for weeks, ever since the Broager batteries have been thrown up, to sit with our arms folded and be shot at according to the caprice of the Prussian gunners. This morning, however, the Prussians allowed us to have our share in the game, and in consequence we are all in good spirits.

I will unfold my story systematically. Yesterday, we flattered ourselves, as it was Easter Sunday, that we should be allowed a quiet day. At about 10 o'clock, however, we were startled by a peculiarly brisk cannonade, which soon collected our English colony into a knot of observation. We are, I am afraid, ominously like the ravens, for anything at all unusual brings us rapidly together, to croak over its meaning. On this occasion we started in a party for a safe point of observation on the Alsen coast, and

devoted our Sunday morning to watching the smoke, and to listening to the hiss of the shells, as from the different Prussian batteries they raced with each other across the Venning Bond. For my own part, I must confess that, whether the fault be on my side or on that of the Prussians, my feelings would have better suited any other day in the year than Easter Sunday. The belief that at last you are putting aside play and taking up the real business of war, does not allow the blood to creep through the veins with all its ordinary soberness.

In the afternoon the cannonade lost its briskness, and then died away. Could anything be more hopeless than to guess at the meaning of such apparent waywardness on the part of our enemy? and as we trudged home, none of our party could offer any better solution of the mystery, than the somewhat humiliating one, that the Prussian artillerymen having a certain number of shots

to fire in the week, had fallen somewhat into arrears, and wishing to wash their hands and leave their guns alone by 2 o'clock, for the better enjoyment of Sunday afternoon, had treated us to this bit of sharp work in the morning. Whatever our temper was in the forenoon, it was not likely to be sweetened by being again reduced to the belief that we were playing the part of an artillery-subject to the Prussians, either while diplomats were disposing of our interests, or while a commission of officers and royal amateurs were sitting and making notes upon us.

Towards evening, the weather, which had been invariably fine during our stay in camp, began to change; a fine rapid rain set in; the night was dark; the moon was so beset with clouds that, like a beauty amongst her admirers, you could see nothing of her; and we went to bed, complaining that the camp which had become so pleasant under the drying influence of sun and wind would, if

the rain continued, relapse into its old condition of winter slush, which *les premiers-arrivés* had so pathetically described to us.

One of us, strangely enough, had a presentiment that the troubled night would bring something forth, and he said so; but we are in the habit of thinking lightly of "the wolf" of each other, and having discussed up to the last moment of waking, the most desirable position for some new batteries, we gave ourselves up without further thought on the subject, to turning the hours of the night to their proper account.

Some three hours after this, when sleep should be at its sweetest, our door was thrown violently open, and a man darted in, telling us in words that wanted no repeating, that the game was on foot, and that at last the work was on. It was our good host of the Phœnix Hotel at Copenhagen, who had come down for a few days to camp, and who in this all-exciting moment had bethought him

of his English guests. I record a thousand thanks to him for the service, and at the same time the hope that the Phœnix may ever enjoy the perpetual youth of its prototype, without undergoing the same purgation by fire.

But back to my story. Before the words had fairly escaped from his lips, there fell upon the ear that which spoke with even a more thrilling eloquence—the sullen roll of guns, and the sharp intervals of musketry. It is curious how keen is the action of the brain suddenly awakened from sleep. This attack was what we had for so many nights expected. This had supplied the thought which each night we had carried to bed with us, on which we had gone to sleep, and which just as often we had found scattered by the quiet dawning of the next day. At last "the thing" had come, and the reality of it leapt upon the brain, so often cheated by false images, with a fierce activity. We

sprang out of bed, and threw on our clothes, haste fortunately in this instance belying itself, and making good speed. With that ceaseless roll of sound like the untiring roar of the wave in one's ear, any delay seemed to the last degree painful; and I suppose that there was a certain wild bubbling up of feelings at the time, for I recollect being seized with a most unreasonable hatred of the Prussians, and a great longing, which my companion maliciously declares found words for itself, to discharge upon them a fast accumulating flood of abuse. As we were still dressing, our friend Major M—— came in, with the kind intention of awakening us. To do the same service by another friend, Captain Bond, was the thought of my companion, which was rewarded by our meeting him already dressed at the foot of his stairs, and then without any further delay to tax our patience, we set our faces towards the front.

Through the streets, jostling against the soldiers who quietly and unconcernedly were proceeding to take up their posts (which I ought to add, we afterwards had reason to know was done in a complete and orderly fashion) as if the enemy was only waiting for them to do so, we made our way down to the bridge. A long column was defiling over it, but thanks to the good nature of the men, we easily picked our way through them. I shall not readily forget the tramp of those thousand feet along the bridge; before us ceaselessly roared the dull hoarse sound of the cannon, possessing to my ear all the changing tones of the voice of some wild beast, but never tiring, never pausing to take breath, ever growling sullenly on, as if, once awakened, it could never again be hushed to sleep; yet in it there was not the same reality as there was in the tread of those troops, for that was the step of men marching up to fight, marching with one purpose, marching firmly and delibe-

rately to take their place and bear their part. There was an awe and a majesty in that tread as it leapt from under the feet of the column and it seemed to be even heavier with the meaning of war, than the roar of the cannon, terrible and dear though that may be to those for whom it calls.

Onwards we went; the bridge and its burden, the *tête du pont* and its defiant palisades, are left behind us; onwards we press past fresh troops halted in column; past General Gerlach and his staff; while the imperious summons of the cannon gives us fresh strength and speed. We follow the broad military road, and as we gain the higher ground we find ourselves suddenly plunged in the track of the Prussian bullets; we duck our heads like young troops, and turn off the road; a ditch but a few yards to the left gives us good shelter and scarcely checks our progress; our ditch fails us, but the necessity of the moment is giving us a

rough lesson in skirmishing and we take good care of ourselves. Presently we regain the road on lower ground, and find the first line of reserves drawn up. Our friend the Swedish colonel is in command, as quiet and self-possessed as ever; we exchange short greetings and a strong grip of the hand, and pass on, gladly leaving him where a good soldier would wish to be, with his men drawn up behind him and the enemy in front. A few steps more, and we reach the breastwork, and make our way to that part of it which joins forts IV. and V.

The breastwork is held by a field battery, and lined with men who are crouching under it. We exchanged greetings, subdued by that quiet warmth which sometimes passes between men who feel that there is serious work before them. The officers were standing looking over the breastwork, and had a little difficulty in keeping some of the soldiers under cover, who were not only anxious to see

for themselves, but to show us all that could or could not be seen. Indeed, throughout the whole time, we noticed an almost tender care on the part of the officers to restrain their men from any useless exposure; a precaution which in their own case they completely forgot.

From the breastwork we look down over the Dybböl slopes. Night was still brooding over them, and it wanted yet some time to "the lifting of the dawn." There was an eloquence in that darkness, as it lay murkily yet without being black and impenetrable upon the ground, such as could belong to no scenic display. Thoughts began to crowd thick upon the mind, as the eye nervously strained itself in its effort to disentangle from the blotched darkness the form of moving men, and as the ear sought through the booming of the guns and over the crackling musketry to catch that awful sound which is trodden out by the feet of an advancing

column. Into that darkness we looked forth, as if into some region of evil, in which a danger was slowly forming itself and was soon about to drag its hideous form before our view. Where was it lurking? How long before it would disengage itself from under the brow of the hill? How long before the horror would become a real and living thing? Should we see, in one long line, the flash of bayonets glimmer over the crest, or in broken knots would the storming parties race up against each other, and hurl themselves against our weakest points?

Then, in that moment of painful watching, the sighing wind came up from the valley, and brought with startling distinctness the cheering of the Prussian troops. They could not be more than 200 yards from us, a mere step it seemed to be which divided us from them. Less than two minutes would be time enough to throw upon us the first line of our assailants, if but resolutely they set

foot to ground for so short a race. There is nothing to stem the first shock of the affront. Our slender breastwork has no ditch in front of it; its height would not check an English hunter in its stride; our line is but two deep, and, as I glance behind, I can see no friendly reserves at hand to throw across the path of the torrent. But as my eye falls upon the men who are crouched under the parapet, there is a comfort which I read in the look settled on their faces. There is a determination so quiet and yet so grim, a smile of stern longing, and a clutch upon the bayonet, which might well restore a failing heart; which makes that 200 yards seem far, and strewn with death for the quickest step or the bravest runner; which crowns that feeble earthwork with such a growth of great steel thorns, that those of us who stand there no longer care to deepen our line or to cast anxious glances back to our reserves. That expression on the men's faces, though almost

graven in its quietness, touches as if with fire the more excitable nature of Englishmen, and one of our party asks if we too may not have bayonets for our share in the work. But bayonets there are not for us, and our next sober thought makes us glad that it is so.

Again the same cheering burdens the night-wind, and creeps distinctly up to us. A sudden motion amongst the men makes us believe that some keener eye than ours has pierced the darkness and caught the advance of troops, and that our men are springing up to meet the moment in which man will be opposed to man, and steel to steel, and the wave must either be broken and thrown back, or crush those who stay in its path. But the moment's hope and fear subside; they are only preparing to fire a field-piece; they will fire in the direction of the cheering, for as yet the darkness yields up no foe to the eye.

We keep firing at intervals, the flash of the cannon for one moment tearing to pieces

before us the thin veil of night, but giving us no glimpse into the mysterious region which contains our enemy. Everywhere night clings thickly to the ground.

Then, as the first excitement begins to pass from us, we spectators hold a council of war amongst ourselves, and arrive at the decision, to fall back and see from the higher ground more of what is passing, so that if things come to the worst, we may preserve our communications open and command a retreat. Sullenly we carried out our decision; with almost a feeling of self-reproach we left our friends to guard the earthwork, and inclining to our left, with back turned on friend and foe, we made for the high ground on which the mill, the Danish observatory, stands. This was too much swept by Prussian bullets to be pleasant standing-ground, and we make our way towards the right of our position, that side which rests upon the silver folds of the Als Sund; a

farmhouse, a quarry-pit sunk on high ground tempt us for a few moments with a partial view, and with the ignoble shelter they afford; but all along the line the tempest is raging in front of us, and inexorably it summons us back to it with the same voice and power with which the strife of the elements drags man from under roof or rock to become its spectator. When the roar of the cannon is calling, and the glorious strife is set in order, the moment is unsuited to think of shelter or of precautions for retreat; and I do not think that any of our party, though we each industriously tried to prove to the other that we were doing "the sensible thing," ever spent any more miserable and more unsatisfactory minutes than those which began when we turned our back on the earthwork and the men who held it, and ended when we again turned our faces towards it. You may go and stand upon an opposite height, and look at men fighting far beneath you and see

positions won and lost and gallant deeds done, and your pulses may still beat quietly enough to allow you to be a cool and observant spectator; but if you descend into the strife, you must leave thought of yourself upon the height above you; once enter the charmed circle, and there is no return; as well hope to see hounds and horses stream over the grassy upland before you, and to turn your own horse's head in the opposite direction. You cannot lightly desert men for whom you have feelings of sympathy; you cannot desert them when they have yet to face a danger, and feel that you have done an honest thing. You may pursue your sight-seeing (if that is your object) and remain out of all harm's way and clear of danger, and with such an object it is far better to do so; but if anything once tempt you to leave your seat of safety and descend into the arena, there are no half measures remaining for you, and you must

make up your mind to share all the fortunes of those with whom you have cast in your lot. Moreover, until you have done so, and thrown away all possible regard for consequences, each bullet which wings its way over you interrupts your enjoyment of all that is passing, in a fashion which is not in its power to do when you have once hardened your heart, and with your own intentions once and for good set clearly before you, have dismissed from your mind all further consideration on the subject. No bullets hissed so venomously as those which passed over our heads as we turned away from the breastwork, and none sang so musically as those which greeted us on our return.

I must say a word about those Prussian bullets. They are of a peculiar shape, being broadest at the shoulder, and make an unusual sound in passing through the air. The "ping," which best represents it, will sometimes pass into a musical vibration, as if

you had touched a tightly-stretched cord, and you receive a humming rather than a hissing notice of their flight. Soldiers soon get, I think, as familiar with them as with a swarm of any other venomous insect, whose angry buzzing becomes at last scarcely noticed by the ear.

The morning broke in sharp contrast with what the night had been. Out of the misty, murky night a clear, rosy-coloured dawn found birth. There was a keen white frost, and the ground was hard under our feet, and occasionally sent a bullet hopping against the parapet. It was a pretty sight to see in that delicate morning-light the action unfolding itself before us. Down in the valley, and thickly lining the hedges of the slope opposite to us was the enemy, and between us hovered the smoke of his musketry-fire and of our guns. Suddenly upon our left, from the foot of the slope of No. VI., we saw a stream of men pouring down. They had, I presume,

advanced up to that point in the darkness, and had hitherto remained in partial shelter; but probably being reached and galled by the fire of one of the forts, had nothing left for it but to run an extremely dangerous gauntlet before they could regain shelter. In whatever way they came there, they were at all events making the greatest haste at that moment to change their quarters—a few fine fellows, disdaining to join in the general run, and walking proudly after the scattered crowd in front of them. Up to that moment one's feelings had been far more vindictive than merciful; but I must confess, that as I saw that helpless crowd flapping over the bare field and a large unsheltered stretch of ground still before it, I felt glad to see musket-ball and shell, though the latter were well thrown, searching its flanks without any apparent injury: such was the looseness with which it streamed along, or the good fortune which befriended its nakedness.

By this time, and indeed before this, the whole affair had entered on a completely different phase, both in a military and a descriptive point of view. What the Prussians had originally meant to do is rather difficult to decide. It was not, I believe—and such is the opinion of Head-quarters—an organized attempt at a *coup-de-main;* nor do I believe that it was simply a *reconnaissance.* In the latter case, on what business were the twenty-five prisoners who were taken in a pit just outside No. II. engaged? According to their own account, I believe, no attack was intended; but they say that when Rolf Krake opened fire on them they took shelter in this pit and were so cut off from their companions. But, independently of this curious and forward detachment of twenty-five, what was the meaning of the advances made at other points against the line—of the enemy actually penetrating up to the intrenchments—of the forming of columns at the foot of

the slopes and of their lusty cheering, or of that remnant which we saw dislodged in front of No. VI.? Our English major here, whose views are remarkably shrewd and sound, conjectures that some general of division fancied that he saw the opportunity of surprising the position, and acting on his own responsibility made this ill-managed dash at it. I am inclined to think that this is the true explanation; for I do not see my way to believe that the Prussian troops would be found wandering about our Dybböl slopes which are, as you know, in evil repute amongst them for all sorts of concealed dangers, and under the noses of our guns, if they merely wished to make a *reconnaissance* of ground in front of our outposts, who are in no part of the line at a less distance than 300 yards from the forts.

But to return to my description—whatever was meant to have been done by favour of night, the whole affair was now fast degene-

rating under the influence of daylight into a mere piece of skirmishing practice. It was a pretty sight to see the wave and bend of our enemy's front line as it followed the shelter which the inclination of the ground or the hedges afforded, and as our shells, finding their range, kept forcing it further from us; it was a flambeau worth lighting, when with a profusion of glowing colour part of Dybböl village took fire, and there rose from it betwixt the combatants a tall column twining and intertwining as if with painful struggles its dark green smoke and orange flame; it was a stirring moment when our skirmishers were let loose from the forts and dashed down into the valley beneath us; but it was no longer *le grand jeu;* it was simply a murderous fire between skirmishers in which a number of brave lives were left upon the ground, and which, after it had lasted some two or three hours, like an ash-faggot at yule time, went slowly crackling out.

The needle-gun is, I am convinced, very effective. The argument which I hear brought against it, that men fire quick and waste their shots, was, I have no doubt, employed against any suggestion of altering the old match-lock, and is equally valuable in this case. Its influence in war will be much felt, for it has the tendency of levelling the courage of troops employed against each other. A small number of men who are good shots with this weapon may so sweep the ground before them as to rob the bayonet of both its *morale* and its effect. Placed in well-trained hands it will I think alter the inequality which is supposed to exist between attack and defence; and a position defended by it will in future assaults be taken at a much heavier expense in life than has hitherto been the case.

My account of Easter Monday now comes to a close. I ought to add, that we brought home an excellent appetite for breakfast, which Paulina tells us she had prepared for

the Prussians and not for us. She pretends to "Prussian proclivities," but Prussian, or Dane, or English, it is all one I believe to her cold Gipsy blood—she cares as much for any of them or of us as she does for the soldier (an officer, according to her story) whose photograph she showed us the other day, and whom she was to have married—an idea which she dismissed from her mind when the poor fellow lost his nose from a Prussian bullet. I do not however feel sure, considering that the loss of "this witch" and of his nose go together, that he ought to be considered unfortunate.

P.S.—It is getting late—additional reserves are ordered up to-night, and are now marching under my window; for we are on our guard against better arrangements on the part of the enemy. I could indeed find it in my heart to wish, for the sake of the Danes, that the Prussians would accept last night's affair

as a challenge, and now at this very hour, throw themselves with all their weight upon the line of forts. We are to a man fit and well, and we shall at least give a good account of what we hold; come of it what might, it would be far better than being slowly crushed by artillery and science.

The singing of the men is fading in the distance—there is many a nervous expectation that accompanies them to-night to their post.

Ah! that cannon—that cannon! are we again to-night to sleep and wake to hear its glorious calling?

LETTER XI.

Sönderborg, 30 March, 1864.

I have reserved my most interesting subject for the last letter which I shall write to you from camp. I have often alluded to the soldiers who compose the army here, but I have never yet sat down to write you a full account of them; and I am glad now that I have not done so, since the affair of Monday morning (Easter-Monday) has added to my experience of them.

The first thing that you must remember is that as you look on these men collected in camp, you are looking at a reflection of the

entire country life of this little kingdom. The whole industry which cultivates the soil, which labours in wood and iron and stone, which builds the ships, and mans the little fishing boats of Denmark, is here brought into one focus under your eye. Gravely yet cheerfully each man has laid aside his own trade and taken up the new business of war. It is these same sturdy arms which have made Denmark happy and prosperous, which have sown plenty and contentment broadcast through the land, and which are now holding musket and bayonet for her defence against the invasion of a time-old and traditional enemy. As you know, they are raised by conscription; but this in no way seems to diminish from the cheerfulness with which they come to fight the German, nor does it restrain volunteers, some of whom have left new homes in far-distant countries, from hastening to throw in their lot with them.

I told you the other day that I was anxious to find something to criticise in those who surround me; I have now succeeded in doing so, but I derive less satisfaction from the discovery than I promised myself, and as I proceed to unburthen myself of it, I feel a considerable depression of spirits. I am satisfied of the honesty, of the patience, of the thorough bravery, I might even add of the loveable character, of the soldiers, and of the gallantry and devotion of every officer throughout the army; I am fairly and fully satisfied of all this—and the opinion of our English colony would confirm me in my belief if I needed it—but the conviction grows upon me from day to day that all this is of no profit to us, that in every sense we are but children playing at war, while away yonder, hovering round us, is an enemy who knows his trade well by heart, and who is as able to encompass our destruction as he is determined to do it.

You know how French officers shrugged their shoulders after our Balaklava charge. "C'est magnifique — mais ce n'est pas la guerre." In a certain sense it is the same thing here. We have a splendid material: a set of deep-couraged men who are resistance itself — whose square-set shoulders and burly forms, whose grave confidence and quiet keenness for battle, builds up so good a wall of defence in flesh and blood betwixt us and the columns of the enemy that for to-day or to-morrow better there need not be; but as for war, its science and its resources, as to any opposition to a well trained and crafty enemy, as to scheme and counter-scheme, mine and counter-mine — Heaven help us! for we have none of these things. When the really evil days begin, and the Prüssians, stung with their check of the other day, kindle from the one horn to the other that deadly crescent which is enfolding us, when the full flood of fire descends which

they will be able to pour upon our feeble earthworks, when morning after morning men must go to be merely shot at, and as all shelter yields to the violence of the storm to lay down life after life at their weary post, in what stead then will stand to us all this courage and this fortitude? An enemy whom we cannot see, and with whom we may not fight, and whom we have no means of checking in his advance, will rob our little army of its best and bravest lives, which will be spent without even exacting a price from the enemy.

I repeat again, this is not war. I should be flattering my Danish friends—I should be saying what I do not believe to be true—if I said that they were engaged in carrying on a system of war. Where are the rifled cannon? the breech-loading rifle? the system of collecting intelligence? the precautions against information reaching the enemy? the engineering industry which saved a Sebastopol,

even when no army lay between it and the enemy? the untiring invention which is ever busy to save life on the one side and take it from the other?—in a word, all the resource and the cunning, the reflection and the promptness, the scheming and the execution, which makes war the deepest and subtlest game at which men or nations play, and which makes the man who plays it successfully the master of the destinies of the world?

And yet, keen as is the vexation under which I write this, I feel that there is no nation which should have so much patience with these Danish shortcomings as ourselves. Their concentration upon one habit of life, their want of versatility and quickness, their very simpleness and want of cunning, are qualities which belong to the old stock, and which have descended to both nations—Danes and English—although to the Danes in double portion. With us our concentra-

tion on what we do, and our temporary inaptness to change easily from one set of circumstances to another, has never shown itself more strongly than when we have entered on a war; the opening of a campaign has been notably with us the opening of disasters; and it is because we have had sufficient resource, and because our insular position does not permit first mistakes to be fatal, that we have finally retrieved and redeemed these disasters. But the Danes, suddenly arrested in the calm flow of the agricultural life and primitive employments in which the energies of the race are absorbed, are far more unfit than even we have proved ourselves to be placed suddenly face to face with a formidable enemy; and while, like us, they have not the pliability and the quickness which is necessary to make circumstances and themselves suit each other at a moment's notice, unlike us, they have not resources sufficient to in-

spire confidence in the protraction of the struggle.

I have, however, by this time probably wearied you as much as I have myself, by dwelling on this gloomy side of things, and I pass gladly to the cheerful picture which the men individually present: If I seem to write much about them, you must recollect as my excuse, that they are the most prominent feature in our daily life: on the stairs, at the door, in the street, in the quiet country roads, or amongst the forts and trenches, those brown and honest faces nod a greeting to us everywhere. Moreover, the events of yesterday have effectually sealed our friendship.

In speaking of the honesty of the soldiers, I must first tell you that this is the most honest country in which I have ever travelled, and the men of it are the most honest of all my friends and acquaintances. You may travel here, according to my small experience,

without being either cheated, or over-charged, or falling a prey into the light-fingered hands, which in most countries at the first opportunity seize and spoil a traveller. I told you that we lost our small portmanteau on our way here. It was taken out by mistake at Swenborg in Fünen, where the steamboat touched. It was *unlocked*, and gaping as too well-filled portmanteaus will do. For two or three days it travelled about independently before it overtook us, and when it did so—although I am afraid of guessing the number of hands through which it passed—it had not suffered the loss of a single article. Here in Sönderborg, crowded and garrisoned, prices have scarcely, if at all, risen. We may not be able to get a thing or we get it with difficulty, but if we do get it we are not called upon to pay any war-tax upon it. Two German Jews are said to be driving a good trade in the town; but these good Danes neglect the sun and the

haymaking, and are too simple and too honest to wish to make a fortune for themselves at the expense of each other.

It is very pleasant for me to find that my friends the soldiers support everywhere this character of honesty. Herr Rosen has had over two hundred billetted upon him; not a complaint of any sort had he to make—nothing taken, nothing hurt, nothing disturbed; but the whole business of the farm is going on as uninterruptedly as it would without their presence, and only inconvenienced by the present scarcity of labour—the men having literally left, as says one of the Danish songs which they sing on the line of march, "the pleasant fields to be cared for by boys and girls." The same account is given to us by a smaller farmer, on whom some forty men are billetted, and again the same account by the peasants at whose houses we stop to ask the same question. One farmer alone tells us, with a good-natured grin, that

on one occasion a few dragoons helped their horses to some of his hay, but his look adds they were welcome to it.

As we listen with pleasure to all these good accounts of our friends, we find some difficulty not to express our admiration at the cheerfulness with which farmer, peasant, and all classes, bear the present burdens which do not eat lightly into their substance. As to the soldiers, I ought to add that I saw a wandering pig the other day, who would gladly have squeaked his assent to my account of their honesty. He once belonged to a farmhouse inside our lines which is now levelled to the ground, and he has since been walking ownerless about, and apparently without any likelihood of becoming pork chops, unless he places himself in the way of a Prussian shell.

I have no fear of asserting the high courage of these men: it is of that order which belongs to northern races, and which we prize

so highly—the staunch fortitude which dies with a smile upon its face. We have seen them under fire, patiently enduring throughout the whole day the monotony of being fired at; we have seen them cheerful as well as patient under these circumstances; and, as I have before told you, unwilling to be in a better position of shelter than that occupied by any of our party; and we have seen the same constant cheerfulness amongst them, whether the day's casualties had been more or less than usual. Yesterday, when the shouting of the Prussian column rose up to us over a distance of some 200 yards, I read in the face of the men who formed that very thin line, drawn up two-deep behind the breastwork, but one expression of quiet, confident, hopeful longing; and, as I looked carefully and curiously into their features, I felt that I would not have replaced those peasants at that moment by the soldiers of any other army in Europe.

We saw the rest of the men during the day under the ordinary trial of being exposed to fire, and bearing themselves under it as the soldiers of any brave army would do; and I only care to notice to you the conduct of the ambulance men, who could not have walked more leisurely and deliberately in the safe street than they did yesterday on the outer slopes of Dybböl, looking for wounded skirmishers, with a defiance almost lordly of a most venomous shower of musket-balls.

I have the highest opinion of the courage of these men; indeed I think that, individually, it is higher pitched that that of the best fighting nations; but we are all of us here aware that they are dangerously subject to depression. With all their manliness and bravery they have a very considerable resemblance to children; and, though their spirits never rise so high, their simplicity renders them very keenly influenced by the circumstances in which they are placed. I should

be inclined to think that they have not much self-dependence, and in difficult times would require a good deal of kind and judicious handling. I have already told you how depressed the army was when it first found shelter behind the Dybböl forts, and this depression is the greatest enemy to which the peculiarities of our position expose us.

I am, however, thankful to say that I finished finding fault at the beginning of my letter, and I am not going to take up again that dull-coloured thread. I have pleasanter topics before me. I have to tell you about the grave and sober respectability of my friends. There is never any drunkenness, never any barrack-row or disturbance; I much doubt if there is a provost-marshal in existence, and I have certainly never seen any pickets patrolling the streets at night. We have no camp followers of that vulture class which generally closes round the rear of an army. Life and property are as safe here, excepting

the interference of Prussian shells, as they would be in the quietest country district in England; man, woman and child may walk fearlessly at all hours about the lines, and experience neither a look nor a word of insult. With all this sobriety of conduct there is also a strange gravity about these Northerners which is scarcely displaced by their child-like curiosity, or the humour which is brought twinkling out by any joke about the enemy, or a jest at the expense of a passing shell.

I saw them the other day throwing up a battery under the Sönderborg church. To do this it was necessary to cut deep into the churchyard, and sadly to disturb the bones and skulls of those for whom had been chosen so insecure a resting-place. By any other soldiers "these belongings of poor humanity" would have been tossed aside with a joke, or thrown into the bed of the battery; but these grave fellows took them one after the other

and placed them carefully aside. On Easter Sunday, had you entered that church, you would have noticed a curious contrast—one of those which war delights to arrange—in what you left on the outside, and what you found within. In the church, voluntarily attending the service, were some 300 of the soldiers, joining together in the responses and the singing; while in the graveyard outside arose the ceaseless click of spade and mattock, busy in the service of war, and not even sparing the sleeping-places of the dead.

And yet, though there is amongst them a peculiar respect for the dead, to such an extent that a dead Prussian would meet with all tenderness and care from them, they are strangely indifferent about putting on one side the sights which belong to death. They make their coffins where they prepare their dinners; and they leave on one side of a common thoroughfare great piles of these hideous black cases. Moreover, they are not

sufficiently careful in covering the dead bodies of those who are brought back in carts, and which, particularly in cases of shell wounds, present a sight that might well be spared even to the eyes of a camp.

I have already told you how strong are the home affections of these men. We are encountering constant proofs of the kindliness of their natures; there are many cheery invitations to drink "schnapps" from their big-bodied leather flasks, which we have to refuse. They will take any trouble to show us the way, or find anything which we want. A corporal the other night took us through eight different sleeping barracks in quest of an officer for whom we were in search; and was at any moment of our wanderings far more unwilling to give up the pursuit than we were. The only thanks which we could offer, and which would not have mortified our kind guide, was a shake of the hand. Their hearts are easily won by any sympathy shown

to them; one of our party the other day won the hearts of a whole fort by taking out his handkerchief and wiping the dust out of the eyes of a man who had been stunned and buried in sand by a shell which burst unpleasantly near to him. I have also heard them send up a truly rapturous hurrah, with all the depth and meaning of an English cheer, when they saw done what they considered to be an act of gallantry. That perhaps which touched me the most, was the eager and pained inquiries, as I forgot to tell you in my letter of the other day, which they made of us about one of their officers, as fine and brave a lad as ever entered an action, who had been struck down by a bullet. There are many little services which we freely exchange with them. If anything is stirring, they are not satisfied until they have succeeded in pointing it out to us. A look through our field glasses, or through my friend's sketch-book, is the easy courtesy

which is in our power. If we ever drink a pledge in their "schnapps," we can return the compliment by presenting them with a small flask charged with brandy, of which they never take but the most moderate sip. One of our party, our latest addition, presented to them his flask containing cherry-brandy; but even the Dane's politeness could not disguise that it was more strange than palatable to him.

They are very intelligent. Each man understands what he is fighting for; he knows the history of the quarrel, or at least his own history of it. He knows what has been the conduct of other nations, and he is often familiar with the names of Lord Palmerston, and Lord Russell, after both of whom he does not fail to inquire anxiously. He is at the same time very simple-minded as you know. The other night when we were a party of four, we were taken prisoners by a corporal who suspected us of being spies, and whilst he sent

for an officer, frankly but most politely, told us so. Suddenly, on looking up at us, he exclaimed, "Ah! tell me how many you were when you first came; has not one of you gone away?" A question to which the honest fellow evidently expected an honest answer from his captured spies. Although after this, he was very careful not to let any of our party take a step to the left or to the right, he thought it his duty to do all he could to amuse us with conversation until the officer appeared, pronounced our passes satisfactory, and relieved his much perplexed mind.

Brave, honest fellows! I have long since ceased to see any slouching gait or clumsiness in their thickset figures as they come marching home, giving free expansion to the rough love of music which sits close to the heart of each man. They are innocent of any drill-sergeant, and it is a long time since the greater part of them underwent

their one year's training in soldier-craft, but I know that they all carry great hearts with them up to the Dybböl forts, and I would stake all that I possess, that when "the wild bloody day" comes upon us, they play the man as gallantly as their race has always done.

Brave, honest fellows! I can only tell you with difficulty how my heart rises up to wish God-bless-them, now that we are on the point of leaving them, and perhaps of never seeing one of them again. There are dark miserable thoughts which crowd my mind, as I look forward to the future which lies before them. Should any disaster fall on this small army, where, when these hearts have done beating, and these arms are stiff and cold, where will Denmark find new lives and new sinews to plant her fields and gather her increase? Where will there be found those who shall continue this gallant race, who shall be the fathers of the next generation?

Where throughout this land, so happy a few months ago, where will you find any home, unvisited by the angel of death, uninhabited by widows and orphans?

I have rëäd of an Arcadia, but I never thought to have set my foot within it. In all soberness of speech, the virtues and happiness of this country would lead me to give this name to it, were it not that in the very moment in which I first discover the picture, there is a dark curtain which seems to be descending and blotting all out. I have rëad of a "patriot-army," of peasants, and ploughmen, and fishermen fighting for their country, and burying the care of self, and home, and family, in that deeper love; but except in my dreams, I never thought to have seen what I only imagined from my school-books.

As I write, I feel that there is a bitter irony laughing through my words. My Arcadia is a prey to Uhlans and to Croats; my patriot army stands on the eve of a trial—where

perhaps the highest science and the fullest resources of war could not save them. Can I accredit them with either? Can I hope that we still live in days, in which patriot armies gain victories, and repulse the hosts of countless invaders?

Dark as are the clouds, and cruel as is the game which is being played out, however chances may fall, and whether I succeed in persuading you or not, I am determined to remain constant to my own belief, that I have both visited Arcadia, and seen a "patriot-army."

Do you blame me in this nineteenth century for cherishing two such illusions, if illusions they are?

THE END.

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Herbert, Auberon
Danes in camp:
from Sönderborg.

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on 15 October, 2018